

Appendix N

Public Meeting Summary Reports



ALAMO RMA

Alamo Regional Mobility Authority

"Moving people faster"

Final Meeting Report

US 281 Environmental Impact Statement Public Meeting #3

Prepared for the Federal Highway Administration

San Antonio, Texas
April 29, 2010

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Alamo Regional Mobility Authority (Alamo RMA) conducted Public Meeting #3 in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) Section 6002 requirements for the US 281 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared for the location on US 281 from Loop 1604 to Borgfeld Drive in Bexar County. The Public Meeting was held on April 29, 2010 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Summit Christian Center located at 2575 Marshall Road, San Antonio, Texas 78259.

The EIS is being developed for an approximately eight mile segment located entirely within Bexar County, as shown in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1 - Project Location Map

1.1. Meeting Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this meeting was:

- to further develop the need and purpose, the range of alternatives and the alternatives evaluation and screening method for improvements to US 281;
- to present the reasonable alternatives to be considered in the Draft EIS;
- to inform attendees of the next steps in the EIS process; and
- to develop a record of public views and participation in this project, as required by the NEPA.

Upon arrival at the sign-in tables, attendees were given an overview packet outlining the major themes that would be presented and discussed during Public Meeting #3. Media representatives were invited at 4:00 p.m. for a preview of the presentation and exhibits. The meeting was conducted in an open house format from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., followed by a formal presentation from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and concluded with small group work session from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Throughout the meeting, the US 281 EIS Team and Alamo RMA representatives were available to answer questions and provide information.

1.2. Outreach Methods

To ensure a wider audience was informed of the meeting, and in compliance with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) regulations, legal notices in English and Spanish were placed in daily newspapers within Bexar County. All notices and articles are included in **Appendix A**.

Here is a list of meeting announcements and media coverage:

- March 28, 2010 - Legal Notice in *San Antonio Express-News*, Legal & Public Notice section, page 6E
- March 28, 2010 – Legal Notice in *La Prensa*, Clasificados section, page 5B
- April 18, 2010 – Legal Notice in *San Antonio Express-News*, Legal & Public Notice section, page 8E
- April 18, 2010 – Legal Notice in *La Prensa*, Clasificados section, page 4B
- April 21-27, 2010 – Advertisement in *San Antonio Current*, page 40
- April 22, 2010 – Advertisement in *North Central News*, page 5
- April 22, 2010 – Advertisement in *Bulverde News*, page 9
- April 25, 2010 – Advertisement in *Herald Zeitung*, page 11A
- April 25, 2010 – Advertisement in *San Antonio Express-News*, page 5A
- April 2010 – Meeting Announcement on *KENS5.com*, Events
- April 2010 – Meeting Announcement on *WOAI.com*, Community Calendar
- April 2010 – Meeting Announcement on *AmericanTowns.com*, San Antonio Events
- April 2010 – Meeting Announcement on *sacommunities.com*, Banner Ad
- April 2010 – Meeting Announcement on *Magic1053.com*, Event Guide
- April 2010 – Meeting Announcement on *Y100FM.com*, Events
- April 2010 – Meeting Announcement on *kissrocks.com*, Event Guide
- April 2010 – Meeting Announcement on *KONO1011.com*, Event Guide
- April 29, 2010 – WOAI EyeWitness News at 5:00 p.m.
- April 29, 2010 – WOAI - San Antonio Living
- April 29, 2010 – WOAI – News 4 San Antonio at 10:00 p.m.
- April 1 – April 29 – Meeting Announcements were emailed to the US 281 EIS mailing list
- April 2010 – Meeting Announcement in Summit Christian Center bulletin

Four dynamic message signs were placed along the US 281 project corridor between April 25, 2010 and April 30, 2010. Two street banners were also displayed near the US 281/Evans Road intersection and the US 281/Overlook Parkway intersection during April 2010. In addition, the marquee at Summit Christian Center displayed a meeting announcement.



The project newsletter was published in English and in Spanish and 39,093 copies were distributed in hardcopy to adjacent property owners, transportation partners, media outlets, Community Advisory Committee members, Peer Technical Review Committee members and other interested parties on April 1, 2010. The following zip codes within and surrounding the US 281 corridor were included in this mailing effort: 78258, 78259, 78260, and 78261.



Letters were mailed to local, state and federal elected officials on March 29, 2010 (see **Appendix A**).

The Alamo RMA managed the pre-, during and post-event media relations for this Public Meeting. A request for coverage was sent multiple times to local media including weekly newspapers, social publications, the San Antonio News Bureau, television and AM/FM radio stations. A copy of the request for coverage, media packet, and media list is included in **Appendix A**.

1.3. Attendance

There were a total of 224 people signed in for Public Meeting #3 including 161 individuals/residents from the surrounding community, 4 representatives from the media, 9 representatives from local, county and federal agencies, and 4 elected officials. In addition, there were representatives present from the Alamo RMA and the US 281 EIS Team, which consisted of consultants from Jacobs, Hicks & Company, Ecological Communication Corporation, Zara Environmental, SMITH/Associates, and Ximenes & Associates, Inc. The sign-in sheets are included in **Appendix B**.

2.0 MEETING FORMAT

The Public Meeting was conducted in three parts:

1. open house
2. formal presentation
3. small group work session

Copies of all exhibits from the open house, slide presentations, and meeting hand-outs are included in **Appendix C** and photos from the meeting are included in **Appendix D**.

Open House: The open house was organized into seven areas. Each area had US 281 EIS Team members present to answer questions relating to the focus of the station.



When attendees walked into the open house chairs were set up for the formal presentation and tables were set up for the small group work session. These areas provided space where people could sit down and write out comments. A court reporter was present during the entire meeting.

Below is a description of each of the seven stations at the Open House:

Welcome and Sign-In Tables – This area provided project handouts, information on the meeting format and information on how the exhibits were organized in the open house as well as opportunities to provide input. As people walked in they were asked to sign-in and given a packet of handouts. These handouts included a meeting agenda, a description of the small group work session, a map of the meeting layout, a comment card, a meeting evaluation and information that focused on the results of Level 2 and Level 3 alternatives evaluation methods and the reasonable alternatives recommended for detailed evaluation in the Draft EIS.

Background Information – This station described the NEPA, the EIS process, milestones and agencies involved in the US 281 EIS. It also differentiated this project from other past or on-going projects along the US 281 project corridor. Additionally, it provided an overview of the need and purpose for improvements to US 281 including historic, current, and projected trends regarding growth in the corridor, safety, functionality, and quality of life. The *Citizens Guide to NEPA* and a US 281 EIS newsletter were available at this station.

Build Alternatives – This area displayed large conceptual layouts and artist renderings of each build alternative recommended to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the Draft EIS:

- **Alternative 1 Overpass/Expansion** – Non-Toll Only
- **Alternative 2 Expressway** – Non-Toll, Toll and Managed Lane Options
- **Alternative 3 Elevated Expressway** - Non-Toll, Toll and Managed Lane Options



How do the Alternatives Compare to Each Other? – This area provided detailed information on the alternatives development and screening process and the results of this process. It also described the rationale behind the recommendation to carry forward some alternatives into the Draft EIS and to eliminate others from further consideration. Additionally, it defined the managed and toll funding options.

A few evaluation criteria were highlighted in this area including:

- Is the alternative compatible with the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization Plan?
- Is the alternative compatible with Camp Bullis operations?
- Would it be easy to provide for high capacity transit in the future?
- What could happen to the US 281 Super Street?
- How much additional right-of-way could be required?
- How much additional impervious cover could there be if this alternative was built?
- How many driveways and side streets could lose access?
- How many homes and businesses could be displaced?
- How much additional right-of-way could be within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone?
- How much additional right-of-way could be within sensitive karst zones?
- How many additional wooded acres could be in the right-of-way?
- How many vehicles per day could be on US 281 in 2035?
- What could be the average vehicle speed on US 281 in 2035?
- How many crashes in the region could be reduced in 2035?



What's Next – This area detailed the upcoming steps for the US 281 EIS and the preliminary timeline for completion. A computer was available in this area to check out the project website, Facebook page and Twitter page.

Alamo RMA Projects – This area provided information about other Alamo RMA projects including the US 281 Super Street, Loop 1604 EIS, and the US 281/Loop 1604 Interchange. Alamo RMA staff were available to answer questions about these projects.

Other Agencies/ Community Organizations – Tables were available in this area for agencies and community organizations to share informational materials.

All informational displays are included in **Appendix C**.

Formal Presentation: The US 281 EIS Team gave a slide presentation that included background information on the EIS process, need and purpose for improvements to US 281, project objectives and the alternative evaluation and screening process. The presentation detailed Level 2 (Modal Analysis) and Level 3 (Multi-Modal Analysis) of the alternatives evaluation process and the rationale behind why some alternatives were recommended to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the Draft EIS and others were recommended for elimination. The formal presentation concluded



with an introduction to the small group work session. The presentation slides are included in **Appendix C** and a transcription of the presentation is included in **Appendix G**.

Small Group Work Session Overview: The participants at Public Meeting #3 were randomly divided during registration into small groups of 8 to 10 people and seated near each build alternative. Each group was lead by a facilitator from the US 281 EIS Team. The small group work session participants were asked to discuss a set of four questions:

1. What do you like about this alternative?
2. What concerns you about this alternative?
3. How well do you think this alternative meets the need and purpose for improvements to US 281?
4. How do you think this alternative would, or would not serve as a long-term solution for US 281?

The answers to these questions were captured on flip charts and a transcription of this input is included in **Appendix H**.



The groups operated in a round robin fashion. Each group spent about 20 minutes reviewing the build alternative and after 20 minutes, they were asked to rotate to another build alternative and repeat the same exercise. Once everyone had the opportunity to discuss each of the three build alternatives, the groups reconvened as one large group and the facilitator of each group presented a brief report to the whole group on the highlights on their group's discussion. The reporting out to the larger group allowed everyone to hear the various perspectives. A transcription of these reports is included in **Appendix G**.

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments received by May 10, 2010, as established in the legal notice for Public Meeting #3, are included in this Meeting Report.

Numerous avenues existed to submit comments before the meeting, at the meeting and after the meeting. These included (1) filling out a comment card and dropping it into the comment box; (2) giving comments verbally to a court reporter; (3) submitting comments by fax, website and/or email; and (4) mailing written comments to the Alamo RMA. All comments are recorded in **Section 4** of this report and a master comment listing, in alphabetical order by commenter name, is included in **Appendix E**. Scanned images of all comments are included, in original form, in **Appendix F** and **Appendix G**.



3.1. Comments Received by the Alamo RMA from Elected/ Local Officials

There were no verbal or written comments received from elected/local officials.

3.2. Comments Received by the Alamo RMA from the Public

Eighty six (86) comments were received during the public comment period.

Written Comments: Seventy two (72) written comments were received during the public comment period from March 28 through May 10, 2010. The comments were comprised of 25 comment cards, 30 emails, 5 comments noted on meeting evaluation forms, 11 website submissions, and 1 mailed comment card. **Section 4** provides a record of the written comments received and **Appendix F** includes a copy all written comments in original form.

Verbal Comments: Attendees were able to utilize a court reporter to document verbal comments as part of the meeting record. The court reporter was present from the start of Public Meeting #3 until the conclusion. There were 14 verbal comments recorded by the court reporter during Public Meeting #3. The table in **Section 4** of this report provides a record of the verbal comments received. **Appendix G** includes a certified copy of the court report transcript.

3.3. Meeting Evaluations Received by the Alamo RMA

Attendees were given the opportunity to fill out a meeting evaluation. Fourteen (14) meeting evaluations were received and the results have been compiled in the table below. The bottom section of the form provided space for other additional comments; 5 of the 14 evaluation forms included a comment. The comments on the meeting evaluation forms were counted as written comments and appear as part the record of comments received by the Alamo RMA (see **Table 2**). The meeting evaluation forms are included in **Appendix F**.

Table 1. Meeting Evaluation Form Results

1. How did you hear about the meeting?		
#	Source	
0	411on281.com	
11	Sign placed in US 281 project corridor	
0	Newspaper	
1	TV	Channel 4 News
1		KSAT 12
0	Church Bulletin	
2	Friend/family/word of mouth	
0	Socializer	
0	HOA/NA bulletin	
0	Facebook	
0	Radio	
0	Email	
1	Other (TURF)	

Meeting Evaluation Questions:*	Did Not Like		Somewhat Liked		Liked Very Much
	1	2	3	4	5
2. How would you rate the location for tonight's meeting?		1		1	12
3. How would you rate the information presented and on display?			1	4	9
4. How would you rate the small group work format used for tonight's meeting?			2	1	5

*Note: Not all questions were answered on all 14 forms.

3.4. Summary of Major Comments/ Issues Addressed

The majority of the comments were centered on issues relating to how the improvements would be funded and opposition to tolls. There were also questions and comments concerning the EIS process and the level of detail considered at each phase in the process; as well as the rationale behind why some alternatives were recommended to be carried forward in the EIS process and why others were recommended for elimination. The issues, topics and questions raised in these comments were grouped into general comment and response categories which are included in **Section 5.0**.

3.5. Recommendation

These comments will be used during the EIS process, especially in the alternative development and screening process; for the revision of the Draft Coordination Plan; and in planning the Public Hearing. There will be more public meetings throughout the process to ensure public involvement.

Here are some specific examples of how public comments have been used to make decisions since this Public Meeting:

1. Carried forward the following alternatives for further consideration in the Draft EIS: No-Build, Expressway (non-toll, toll and managed) and Elevated Expressway (non-toll, toll and managed). Each of the Reasonable Alternative packages will be developed to include the complementary elements such as bus, Park-n-Ride facilities, growth management, transportation system management, transportation demand management and bike and pedestrian facilities.
2. Eliminated the following alternatives from further consideration in the EIS process: Light Rail, Street Car, Overpass/Expansion + Expand Blanco Road and Bulverde Road and Overpass/Expansion.
3. The overall intent of the Overpass/Expansion Alternative, as presented at Public Meeting #3, was to develop a "smaller footprint, lower cost" approach to addressing the project's need and purpose. Based on public and agency comments, in the months following the April 2010 public meeting the US 281 EIS Team worked to identify safe access solutions and improve mobility performance. During the effort it was determined that the safest and most economical access could be provided by the use of a frontage road in most locations. To incorporate frontage roads throughout the project corridor would provide an alternative that was very similar to the Expressway Alternative – Non-toll. After extensive traffic and engineering analysis, the "smaller footprint, lower cost" approach was not able to adequately address the access and

mobility needs of the project. This alternative was therefore eliminated from further consideration in the Draft EIS.

4. Continued to develop alternatives with non-tolled, tolled and managed lane options.
5. Considered access solutions such as frontage roads, backage roads and the purchase of access rights.
6. Through coordination with VIA Metropolitan Transit, all the alternatives considered in the Draft EIS would provide an envelope which could accommodate future high capacity transit and a Park-n-Ride facility near Stone Oak Parkway.
7. Considered how build alternatives could be phased as funding became available.
8. Received the following advice, which has been implemented throughout the public involvement program for US 281:
 - Provided more detailed information about mobility measures, environmental impacts and conceptual designs for improvements along US 281
 - Continued sending out a monthly e-newsletters and using public comments to develop articles of interest for the community surrounding US 281
 - Posted public comments to Facebook and Twitter so interested parties could read what other people are saying about US 281
 - Reduced file size on website to help interested parties access information via the Internet

4.0 RECORD OF COMMENTS RECEIVED BY THE ALAMO RMA

Table 2 includes a record of each comment received during the public comment period from March 28, 2010 through May 10, 2010 organized by the method the comment was received, such as comment card, email, fax, website, USPS mail or court reporter transcript.

The best way to find a comment is to go to **Appendix E**. It includes a list of all comments received, in alphabetical order by commenter name, as well as the corresponding **Reference #** and **Response**. Once the name and associated **Reference #** is found look for the **Reference #** in the first column of **Table 2** and/or look for the associated **Response #** in **Section 5**. The **Reference #** can also be used to find scanned images of each written comment in **Appendix F** and the court reporter transcript of verbal comments in **Appendix G**.

Each comment is presented verbatim as it was received. All comments were considered and will continue to be considered throughout the EIS process to ensure a complete and factual assessment of the project's need and purpose, identification and development of all reasonable alternatives, analysis of potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts, assessment of mitigation measures and commitments, and to ensure that diligent efforts are being made to involve the public in the identification of social, economic and environmental impacts. Comments were given responses using the following approach:

- (1) If a comment simply shared a particular view point, without asking a question, it was given a response of "Comment Noted" in the last column of **Table 2**, labeled **Response**.
- (2) If a comment was submitted multiple times or several comments were related in topic, the comments were grouped logically and a general response and associated **Response #** was given to each comment.
- (3) If a comment was only brought up by one person or was particularly complex in nature it was given a specific response. This is indicated by "Specific Response see **Section 5.2**" located in the **Response** column of **Table 2**.

Please use the last column of **Table 2**, labeled **Response**, to find the response associated with each comment in **Section 5**.

Table 2. Comment and Response Record

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
1	My opinion is there should be a high speed train system not only in this area but for all of San Antonio. It seems a giant waste of highway funds to keep building roads when a train system is what is needed. Why not bring SA into the 21st century? In my area, there are 3 different roads all going the same way. Why? And I have seen this in many other areas also in SA to the same for the 1604/Sea World/151 area. Why is everyone wasting money on more roads when we need a train system?	Comment Card	7
2	Please do everything possible to preserve the integrity of the aquifer. If the source of water for the community is negatively affected, then we all suffer economically.	Comment Card	8
3	We are happy something is getting started finally. I feel the best solution is to build overpasses on the busiest intersections and take out all the traffic lights.	Comment Card	10, 11
4	Favor Alternative #2, expressway. This alternative allows a smooth access and a safe merger to 281 south and north and permits a reduction in traffic congestion. The alternative (#2) also appears to provide overpasses that would allow a more constant flow of traffic which would certainly improve the existing conditions. While we favor Alternative #2, please continue with the super street project. Any improvements will beat what we have today.	Comment Card	10, 17
5	All 3 plans have +s & -s. I appreciate the "band-aid" fix with the Michigan Left Turn Plan. It's not a waste of time or money trying to ease congestion. (I'm only worried that by the time 2012 comes around, those Mich. L.T. Plans will already be over-burdened.) and the cheapest. I think #1 is a quick fix (or the quickest to fix) and the cheapest. I can foresee further expansion to #2 or #3 will be needed by the time 2012 rolls around and its going to be another 3 years of EIS and aquifer issues to then decide we need the larger plans. I am concerned about #1...the exits to Evans [& possibly Stone Oak(but mostly Evans)] will back up on 281 [just like the 281/1604 interchange] because you need a longer exit avenue for the Stone Oak (north) folks. I would recommend an exit just past Encino Rio to extend that avenue. Those Encino Rio folks who need to get on 281 northbound will have to merge on the feeder road with that exiting traffic - not join 281 until past Evans. (I use Encino Rio all the time now, so I can this -- it's ok). I'm leaning towards #2 plan and to start at Evans Road first, but #1 plan is okay too if it gets the ball rolling faster.	Comment Card	10, 11, 17
6	I would like to see the construction complete Opt 1, 2, or 3 as soon as possible. I prefer Opt 1 or 2 due to exit after Marshall Road. I would also like to see the construction has the minimal amount of impact on the present traffic situation.	Comment Card	10

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
7	Alternative 1: (1) Nothing, (2) Limited Access Points, (3) Not at all; (4) Would not serve the long term needs. Alternative 2: (1) High flow w/multiple access points, (2) Nothing, (3) Well suited to needs; (4) Best long-term solution. I rate alternative 2 as the best, Alternative #1 as the worst and Alternative #3 as in the middle. Alternative 3: (1) Better access than Alternative #1, (2) Not as good access and flow as #2, (3) Good, not bad but not great, (4) Poor long term solution.	Comment Card	10
8	Alternative #2 - Expressway allows traffic to continuously flow, and prevents the b/u that is experienced daily. Providing the access road will allow ease of traffic to enter the expressway and accessibility to businesses to be maintained.	Comment Card	10
9	Option 1 (overpass) or II (expressway) as long as there is no toll!	Comment Card	2, 10
10	One year till next meeting -- too long to make decision as to the expansion of this highway. It may be extinct before it progresses. Keep it toll free	Comment Card	2, 9, 25
11	There must be five times the number of vehicles on US 281 compared to all the side streets, why do the side streets get equal time on green traffic lights? Most of the cars commute north toward Bulverde, if you will turn the lights green for 5 full minutes (continuous), much of the traffic will flow on through. This cycle should be repeated every twenty minutes. When the vehicles on 281 drive through the intersection at 10 mph (because the cycle is so short) it severely limits the flow. Leave the lights green longer to increase the flow.	Comment Card	12
12	Alternative 2	Comment Card	10
13	Why did we have to introduce ourselves in small group? Waste of time. Facilitator started late but she handled the crowd well. Scribe was slow-missed answers. Group #1 Good re-discussion/description of alt. Scribe was engineer - too slow (wrote pretty). Facilitator lost control of group but got it back - good effort. Wild, wild west but effective. Group #2 Slow scribe. #2 does best job of meeting purpose/need. 20 minute timed segments worked well to none people/between alts.	Comment Card	25
14	Alt #2 - 1. Advantage Flow is good, Eliminates traffic lights. Disadvantage 2. No continuous frontage, future growth limited, limits access to businesses. Alt. #3 - 1. Advantage Express lane to limit time, flow through. Disadvantage 2. Limited access to expressway.	Comment Card	10
15	After reviewing all the options and attending the public hearing, I like the non-toll expressway option the best.	Comment Card	10

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
16	I like #2 non(toll) the best!	Comment Card	10
17	The alternatives presented are very reasonable if your only goal is to manage increased vehicular traffic based on existing commuter patterns - the destinations north of 1604 served by 281 are bedroom communities with work destinations inside 1604. I see great value in holistic sustainable community planning (current paradigm embraced by DOT/EPA/HUD) for this corridor. What if work/live/play locations were integrated and build within the rider shed implied by 281? What if people didn't need to leave their homes to travel 281 as a commuter corridor.	Comment Card	13
18	No to toll roads. I believe that build overpasses off lanes without toll roads. HOV lanes can be a help. Please use all tax dollars for real improvements.	Comment Card	2, 11, 16
19	I believe Alt #2 non-toll is the best option that addresses all of the areas of Growth, Safety, Functionality, and Quality of Life. It makes no sense to toll 281 N as opposed to greater traveled roads in San Antonio i.e. I35 or I10 which include much more transits traffic as opposed to local and tourist traffic on 281.	Comment Card	2, 10, 15
20	Alternative 2 "Expressway" seems to be the best. Alternative 1 "Overpass/Expansion" would be second best if Alternative 2 is too expensive and would take too much time. Main thing - no toll! Alternative 3 - Elevated may not be as safe in inclement weather. Hurry up and finish!	Comment Card	2, 10
21	Personally, I do not agree with any of the alternatives. They seem to only serve as a "bandage" as opposed to directly fixing the traffic and growth problems. This whole city needs an adjustment from the interior. People are coming to this area for a reason. Construction on this "superstreet will create more traffic, and, in turn, will possibly not be long-standing.	Comment Card	13
22	Elevated expressway - Do not like this alternative. Because it would increase noise level dramatically for residents living near the expressway.	Comment Card	10
23	All 3 alternatives seem reasonable, provided they are not toll roads. Expansion of Blanco and Bulverde should be part of all of the alternatives. Lack of alternative routes when there are accidents on the main road is a problem. This is the first time in five years I have seen proposals that have made sense. No Toll Roads.	Comment Card	2, 10, 32
24	1. Separate expansion of Blanco and Bulverde as distinct options. 2. Widen Bulverde - this will help reduce pressure on 281.	Comment Card	10, 32

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
25	My concerns are taxation or user fees and the aquifer. I live in Encino Park and have lots of family, off of Borgfeld and 1863 placing a toll would be a heavy burden for me and my family. We can't continue to build and pave over the recharge zone. We already have water restrictions in place of the more we pave the less room for water to trickle into the aquifer. I think we should take the money for the "super street" and put towards Option #1 or #3 and keep this corridor "free". Property values are suffering because of inaction and fear of a toll road. Not what I was told in 2001.	Comment Card	2, 8, 10, 17, 24
26	Overpass/Expansion plan: I think this is best plan because we can afford it - No Tolls. Toll roads are racist, elitist mistreatment of working people.	Comment Card	2,10
27	I strongly disagree with the use of HOT lanes. The HOT lanes and HOV lanes are one of the biggest waste of tax payer's money ever invented. I have driven in areas of the USA where HOT lanes are in use. In Houston along I-10 there is heavy traffic on the highway while the HOT lane is empty. In the Los Angeles, CA area when driving west towards Corona the same pattern occurs; empty HOT lane with the regular highway stopped in bumper to bumper traffic. Driving along I-405 in Los Angeles, CA I observe an empty HOV lane with bumper to bumper traffic in the regular lanes. No one changes their driving patterns because there is an HOV or HOT lane. Neighbors do not live and work adjacent to each other. If they can carpool great. But the fact that a HOV lane is available is not an incentive to car pool. Taxpayers dollars would be better spent by adding the proper amount of lanes needed to carry the traffic. A quick short term fix that is not being used is adding to the problem and creating excessive air pollution. The northbound portion of 281 between Evans Road and TCP (Stone Oak) is currently 2 lanes. This portion of road is bumper to bumper traffic, gridlock, between 3 pm and 6 pm every day. There is adequate room, utilizing the existing shoulders, to repaint the lines for 3 northbound lanes. By making this section of road 2 lanes you are creating gridlock every day. This could be easily fixed by repainting the lines. Take the HOT lane concept off the table. In is not a cost effective solution.	Email	9, 10, 16, 33

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
28	I wish you would STOP the push for toll roads!!!! I know the "Super Street" is just a stall until 2012, when the new legislature reconvenes. At least now you can tell everyone that "you are doing something". The problem is that this just helps make the toll road answer cheaper. If you would spend that money on bridges and overpasses, you could have the first five miles done by 2012. But that just makes too much sense for you purposes, which is to generate another cash flow avenue. We are not stupid; we know what you are doing. Like the politicians, you are not listening to the people. The formation of the EIS Peer Technical Review Committee is further proof that you are not listening to the people but are doing what YOU want to do. This program goes along with the Health Care debacle. Let's just keep taking money from the people, they won't know until it's too late. Communism comes to Texas.	Email	2, 17, 18
29	I do not in any way claim to be an expert on anything except what one learns from living for seventy two years. In that length of time I learned that you cannot make the sand flow through an hour glass any faster than the glass is designed to allow the sand to flow. I find it very hard to have any confidence in anyone or any group that would be foolish enough to end a freeway with three of four lanes of traffic allowed to go sixty five miles per hour into a highway with only two or three lanes, reduce the speed by fifteen miles per hour and also install a number of red lights within the first two or three miles of the highway. Are you people out of your mind? Why spend another year or more scratching your head with your studies that mean nothing, but costing millions of dollars while the traffic just gets worse. Is there nobody that can have the balls to make a decision to extend the freeway at least to the county line or as far as highway 46. I don't care how it is paid for. Toll road is great as far as I'm concerned. At least it would be paid for by the ones who caused the problem by moving out here and use it, me included. What is being done now is a brainless plan that will waste a few more million dollars and not make a bit of difference. The only way to relieve the congestion is to eliminate all red lights on Highway 281. I hope you will favorably consider the last sentence of the previous paragraph and move in that direction.	Email	9, 19

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30	<p>I was wondering if constructing overpasses with a combined turn around system to cross over 281 was considered? (I'm thinking of an overpass in the downtown area that is on Commerce. I think it's near the Bexar County Jail.) The traffic on 281 would continue to flow and those needing to cross over 281 wouldn't have traffic lights to contend with until they crossed over the highway. There could be an overpass/turn around system at Evans Rd. and Stone Oak Pkwy/TPC Pkwy as those are two areas with the most congestion. There could be at least (2) lanes of continuous flowing traffic going N and S on 281. If someone needed to exited on Encino Rio going N, then there could be a right turning lane. If they needed to exit Encino Rio going S, then they would need to take the turn-around up at 281/1604. For Evans Rd, Stone Oak Pkwy, TPC Pkwy and Marshall Rd. then there could be turn only lanes for the left and for the right and they could merge with the flow of traffic going across the overpass. The speed limit on those roads are 40, so it would be easier for someone to merge at that speed. And it wouldn't completely stop the flow of traffic for those wanting to travel past all those intersections and for those wanting to just cross over 281. I don't know if that makes sense and I fully understand that it is more complicated than the public thinks, but it was just an idea. An idea that's difficult to put in writing. For what it's worth, thank you for the efforts to finally make the traveling on 281 outside of 1604 more efficient!</p>	Email	10
31	<p>I was and am a proponent of toll roads or HOV lanes and other initiatives that favor those that vanpool, carpool ,etc. I was a proponent of Centra building toll roads and each time I get stuck in traffic leaving or entering our home, I want to showcase a banner saying "Thanks Toll Road Party". I live in Lookout Canyon off of Outlook Parkway and Canyon Golf Road. As we all know, there continues to be significant housing and commercial development taking place throughout this corridor. We love our area, with the exception of transportation matters. We are originally from Houston and are accustomed to toll roads and HOV lanes. However, we have seen HOV lanes in California that are bounded by lesser expensive methods than Houston has used in their concrete barriers. The Alamo RMA should be encouraging families and businesses to carpool, vanpool and should consider HOV lanes to reward them for their support, while longer term solutions are considered and implemented. Help us keep our quality of life. Thanks for all your organization is doing to prepare and position SA for increased growth and prosperity.</p>	Email	13, 16

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32	<p>I am a resident of Lookout Canyon use the 281 corridor daily. I would like to submit a couple of recommendations/comments for the Public Meeting this month: 1. Has the city considered expanding public transportation (VIA) options further north? 2. Has the city considered adding public transportation routes to/from military bases (needs assessment might reveal a surprising number of residents that live north of 1604 but commute to Fort Sam, Lackland, Randolph and Port of San Antonio. 3. We could use police officer patrol in one area in particular where drivers attempt to “cheat/jockey” their way into traffic (northbound on 281 at the Evans intersection—cars will routinely stay in the far right, right turn only lane, only to whip into the center lane while IN the intersection still travelling north. I’ve seen many close calls and incidents of road frustration/rage). The other problem area is northbound on 281 immediately after you travel under 1604, where 3 lanes combine into 2. Drivers again will speed up in the far right lane and then cut the center lane off... or they try to muscle their way in while traffic attempting to merge in from Sonterra is also trying to merge into that lane.</p>	Email	Specific Response see Section 5.2
33	<p>As a resident of the Encino Park area, I go to work each weekday morning by driving to highway 281 on Evans Rd and turn left to head to San Antonio. I think that the idea of having overpasses is a good idea for each of the existing intersections that have traffic lights. Have at least two lanes in each direction that go over the intersection with the traffic light so that vehicles that do not need to turn at the intersections do not have to stop. Only those needing to turn left or right, or entering 281 would need to encounter the traffic lights using the outer lanes. Turnaround lanes could also be built into the overpasses for those no on the overpasses. It is my understanding that the money to do this has already been allocated for this and we just need to get the work started. It would also be good to get started with interchange ramps between Loop 1604 and highway 281 for ALL directions.</p>	Email	2, 9, 10, 17
34	<p>Increase lanes from a total of six (6) lanes to eight (8) lanes by utilizing the center median for two (2) more lanes. One (1) additional lane in both directions. Dedicate the additional inside lanes (fast lanes) to HOV traffic only. Centerline median barrier to separate north and south traffic. Construct overpasses on Evans Rd. to go over US 281. Construct overpasses on Stone Oak Pkwy. over US 281. Freeway lanes. No toll on all lanes. HOV lanes require 2 or more people in vehicle. No Trucks. Sound barrier wall along residential area of Big Springs, south of Evans Rd., west side of US 281 Construct with existing Texas gas tax revenue and Federal Hwy monies.</p>	Email	2, 10, 16, 20

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35	<p>Texans do not desire tolls to finance improvements to existing roads. Adding tolls to existing freeways amounts do a double taxation. There is no justification for charging taxpayers to use a highway that has already had its right-of-way and existing infrastructure already paid for. Tolling US 281 will cause drivers to turn already congested neighborhood streets, such as Stone Oak Parkway, into highways as drivers seek alternative routes, thereby increasing the risk to the traveling public. Moreover, the National Transportation Safety Board, NTSB, recently concluded that toll roads, with the accompanying toll plazas, are more accident prone than traditional freeways! In an April 2006 report, the NTSB stated that backups caused by a toll booth contributed to a major accident in Illinois. "The board noted that traditional toll plazas...interrupt the flow of high-speed traffic and tend to increase the incidence of rear-end collisions," according to the NTSB report. Making US 281 a toll way would be the most expensive, most environmentally damaging, and most invasive option which is not in the public's overall best interest. My vote is to add overpasses and access roads within the right-of-way already purchased with our tax dollars. Paying tolls to drive on it would be outrageous. I add that I am outraged that the Alamo RMA spend scarce money to mail me two copies of a flyer that provided absolutely no information. This money would be better spent on financing desperately required improvements to US 281.</p> <p>All options for highway 281 need to remain non-tolled. Want the original plan of overpasses plus one additional lane in each direction. No tolls! We refuse!!</p>	Email	2, 5, 10, 21, 22
36	I am concerned about some problems that would likely be caused by the US 281 toll road. I am concerned not only about its potential to facilitate surveillance, due to remote payment via RFID-chip embedded Easy Passes in cars utilizing this toll road. I am also concerned about the potential for eminent domain abuses. This road would likely be very wide, because I have read that toll roads proposed as part of the Trans Texas Corridor, which I am concerned the proposed US 281 would be integrated into, would be several lanes wide. This could be nearly a mile wide. It has been proposed to concentrate other infrastructure, such as utility conduits, within the course of the toll roads. This could be dangerous in an accident.	Email	2, 24
37		Email	14, 22, 23

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38	<p>I live in Encino Park and I have been to just about every MPO and or TxDOT meeting held in the area on this subject. I cannot believe the way the system has changed since this has all begun. We have more agencies involved in the process and more grid lock and nothing being done to fix the problem. Just a lot of arguing and finger pointing. As a tax paying citizen of San Antonio my whole life I don't care that you mismanaged the gas tax money or that you spent it on something other than fixing and building roads. I just want the 281 and 1604 fixed as was promised before I moved my family out to Encino Park. A Toll Road was never mentioned and never in the mix till four years later. I would have never invested my hard earned dollars in this community if I had known there was even the possibility of there being a toll road. I am sure there are thousands in this area that feel the same way. If the current system of collecting taxes is not sufficient then we need to look at another system but the public is not going to accept this till you stop mismanaging the funds and diverting them from the purpose of building and maintaining roads. (Stop wasting money on things that don't build or fix roads) I don't think the toll road will fix the congestion problem because of the added cost to people who use this corridor and since we apparently don't have the money and probably not a good idea to continue to pave over the recharge zone we need to just build some over passes for now to help. It is my opinion that if we build overpasses over existing cross streets with lights that this will go a long way to getting thru traffic in and out of this corridor. Future developers will need to pay for frontage roads to get customers into and out of their businesses. I've read the book of comments at the MPO meeting on April 29th. Sure looks like most people don't want the Toll Option. Please listen to the people we are trying to tell you what we want and need to fix the problem we live and work here and we know what is best.</p>	Email	2, 3, 4, 9
39	<p>I was not able to attend the meetings last Thursday or Friday although I certainly wished to! Fact is, afternoons in general aren't good for most people as we are too busy working in today's competitive economy to come to meetings like that and Thursday I had an Dr's appointment on the other side of town! I think all such meetings should be in the evening hours when the greatest number of people can attend and such afternoon hours for meetings lend themselves to charges that these meetings are being designed to lessen mainstream, public participation by choice of hours and location which is why there is so much distrust toward your agency by so many people. I want my opposition to tolling personal vehicles noted and my complete opposition to taking away or lessening lanes on present, public infrastructure highways that are already paid for the free use of personal vehicles to be turned into toll roads. I am also opposed to selling public infrastructure to a private interest and feel that there can be a place for RMAs as government agencies verses the TxDOT monopoly on roadways but only when they operate in good faith</p>	Email	2, 22, 25

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
Cont. 39	for the public good. I have no problem with providing designated toll lanes for commercial vehicles of 6 wheels or more and heavy weight, semi-trailer dimensions who can pay tolls and pass their extra wear and tear cost on highways onto their customers being added to present roads but not altering the public right to free use of public roadways already there. There are alternative, funding sources for roads that should be investigated to pay for highway maintenance such as consensual gaming on a county-option basis for metro areas. I think vehicle registration costs should be raised on non-US assembled vehicles in general and luxury or sports cars in particular rather than tolling individually owned vehicles using unconstitutional methods of sending bills in the mail and tracking their comings and goings! All tolls should be through toll booth pay as you use systems that take some type of credit/debit cards instead of requiring toll tags unless that is what the individual company wants to do for their own practical reasons! What is most efficient is not democratic and trying to jam mandatory toll tags and photo billing/checks in the mail systems down peoples' throats is why you have such hostile receptions at your meetings! Using photo identification of vehicle plates to send bills in the mail is unconstitutional, unreliable and lends itself to unacceptable abuse and I will oppose such initiatives with every fiber of my being! Politicians who support photo tracking of personal vehicles/mandatory toll tags are going to find out what awaits them when they are voted out of office which is going to happen soon. Governor Rick Perry and his crooked TxDOT flunkies need to go and will go soon! Jeff Wentworth will never see higher political office and will lose his Chairmanship of the Judicial Affairs Committee once Gov Rick Perry is discredited! Chico Rodriguez and Kevin Wolff will also never see higher office and hopefully the exit door to their political careers once Governor Rick Perry is gone! The RMA has been smart not to identify too closely with Bartel Zachary and their political flunkies mentioned here who have upset too many people for too long! I don't have the axe to grind with you all that I have with others due to what I witnessed at an MPO Meeting not too long ago but it is up to you to keep it that way!		
40	I live and work along the US 281 corridor and drive this road every day. I am for the Expressway or Elevated Expressway options and I am for toll roads. It is time to get this area moving.	Email	Comment Noted

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
41	I recently attended public meeting #3 on April 29, 2010 and found it to be very informative. I left without filling out my comment card, so I thought this might be a good way to give my input. All representatives I spoke with at the public meeting stated that the City's land use planning was not yet considered in the alternatives. Although the City of San Antonio's land use planning for Hill Country Sector is not yet completed, it should be adopted sometime this summer by City Council. I strongly recommend consideration of the Hill Country Sector Land Plan in its draft form (for reference), and City adopted final version, as a basis to validate future planning growth scenarios to ensure safety, functionality, and accommodate growth. After considering all the alternatives presented, and having some insight into the City's Hill Country Sector land planning, I strongly recommend a flexible plan that can realistically support all financial options (non-toll preferably), and promote local economic growth while balancing the existing character and landscape of the area. Sounds like much to consider, but the logical choice is alternative #2. Alternative #2 stands out as the most effective plan that addresses all the governing issues of safety, functionality, growth, and quality of life. I do hope you consider my comments in your efforts to finalize a flexible plan that is feasible, and supported by the public.	Email	1, 10
42	Stop hijacking our gas tax money for projects having nothing to do with road building. Stop trying to turn our roads whether already established or about to be built into toll roads. Stop trying to sneak in toll roads by another name. Stop abusing the tax payers of this State. Stop acting as if you are doing this for our own good when we know it's for you and your homies. Stop giving away the taxpayers roads to foreign or domestic companies to profit from.	Email	2, 4
43	I do not want a toll on 281. Instead of eliminating congestion or adequately handle future growth, it will only push the congestion to the access roads and neighborhood streets, making our roads less safe and will not improve air quality. Therefore the alternative proposed does not meet the purpose and need of the project.	Email	2, 5, 6, 10
44	I recently attended your latest meeting and I am sorely disappointed in the way you do things. How much does it cost for you to create these brochures and visual presentations, much less pay your employees to work at these events? You ask for our comments and then you totally ignore everything we say. Oh yes - you did show a non-tolled plan just to appease us, but then said it would not help to speed up traffic in any way. If you would check the recently built toll lanes in other places, you would see that people are not using them and the states are having to pay for the losses to a foreign company. No telling what we could have accomplished with the money you waste on these meetings!	Email	25

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
45	We the owners of this highway are fed up with all the political nonsense and continuing environmental studies. Where were the environmental impact studies when the developers were allowed to build all the residential subdivisions and commercial businesses? These are our highways that have been paid for once. Now they need to be expanded. The federal funds are there, so let us begin. How is it that it's okay environmentally if it's a toll road, but not if it's an expansion to what is already there? The land has been studied over and over. Again, stop the nonsense and build the overpasses. Also, what damage is being done to the environment by having hundreds of automobiles creeping along bumper to bumper expelling all that dirty exhaust? I am so mad, I can't think to put this message in proper order, but you get the message.	Email	2, 4, 6, 9
46	We wish to go on record as being strongly opposed to any US 281 improvement option that includes new tolls for the use of our public highways. The gas tax we pay now should be used for its intended purpose, which includes upgrading existing public highways.	Email	2, 4
47	My husband and I have attended five or six meetings about toll roads in San Antonio. At each meeting we and the majority of the people in attendance have made it abundantly clear that we are against toll roads. At the April 29 meeting a new term was presented-managed lanes, which is just another term for toll roads. We have seen the managed lanes in the Katy/Houston area. Traffic is very heavy on the portion of I-10 where no tolls are charged while the managed lanes have very little traffic. Just build overpasses on North Hwy 281 and add an additional lane or two for both directions. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out what the problem is. All you have to do is count the number of lanes on Hwy 281 south of Loop 1604 and compare that number to the number of lanes north of 1604 to see why North Hwy 281 is so congested. The Super Street project is a complete waste of our money. It would have been better spent by putting in one overpass.	Email	2, 16, 17
48	I am a home owner in Big Springs Village on the Glen. I am concerned about the noise that all the traffic is going to make and disturb my neighborhood. It should be put into the plans to construct a noise barrier wall or something for our subdivision. It is not acceptable to think that he homeowner's in our subdivision are out of luck and should not have bought in the neighborhood. One of the reasons I chose to build in Village on the Glen is because I was close to 281 and would not have to fight the traffic to get to 281.	Email	20

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
49	I would propose the following improvements. Immediately make two left turning lanes at Evans Road going north on 281. Even with superhighway coming it will help traffic in mean time. Additionally, increase lanes from a total of six (6) lanes to eight (8) lanes by utilizing the center median for two (2) more lanes. One (1) additional lane in both directions. Dedicate the additional inside lanes (fast lanes) to HOV traffic only. Centerline median barrier to separate north and south traffic. Construct overpasses on Evans Rd. to go over US 281. Construct overpasses on Stone Oak Pkwy. over US 281. Freeway lanes. No toll on all lanes. HOV lanes require 2 or more people in vehicle. No Trucks. Sound barrier wall along residential area of Big Springs, south of Evans Rd., west side of US 281. Construct with existing Texas gas tax revenue and Federal Hwy monies.	Email	2, 10, 16, 17, 20
50	My backyard is the 281 freeway, where the Big springs sign is. I furiously object to an over pass, which I will be able to view from my back windows. I moved in this neighborhood 11 years ago and I would never of purchased this home if a huge overpass was in my back yard. I know there is need for some improvements but you need to think of another way of improving the mess on 281. Currently I have the pleasure of hearing beeping noise and other construction in my back yard, once again you didn't think of putting the noise barrier which was supposed to be have been put in several years ago because of the traffic. So here are the reasons not to put the overpass: my back yard would be an overpass, my property value would drop, the noise would be deafening, would not look good. If you want to do this, then purchase our homes and you can do whatever you want. This is something you should of done before all these apartment, homes, schools and businesses. Whoever did the planning and approving of these projects did a poor job in regards to traffic. I patiently wait for another suggestion.	Email	20, 26
51	Increase lanes from a total of six (6) lanes to eight (8) lanes by utilizing the center median for two (2) more lanes. One (1) additional lane in both directions. Centerline median barrier to separate north and south traffic. No not construct overpass on Evans Rd. to go over US 281. Freeway lanes. No toll on all lanes. no HOV lanes Sound barrier wall along residential area of Big Springs, south of Evans Rd., west side of US 281 Construct with existing Texas gas tax revenue and Federal Hwy monies. Additional right hand turn lanes from Evans onto 281 South bound	Email	2, 10, 16, 17, 20
52	Where's the common sense? Three different options for improvements to 281 were presented. My comments to each are presented below. At the meeting it was very obvious that the majority of those in attendance were adamant in favor of non toll only. Many also were in favor of not "over spending" in the near term for future solutions. In effect, many, as myself, are opposed to mortgaging our future for the sake of near term solutions – if we can't afford it don't borrow the money or use "creative" financing to	Email	4 and Specific Response see Section 5.2

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
Cont. 52	<p>build it! There are some analysis of the alternatives that defies common sense. For instance, there would be a net loss in speed by building the overpass expansion option (overpasses and added lane in each direction). Since it is obvious that the traffic lights are the primary inhibitor to speed, it defies common sense to say that today speeds are 25 mph and once overpasses and two new lanes are built the average speed would be reduced to 20 mph! Alternative #1 - Overpass expansion plan - This adds overpasses and an extra lane in each direction. It allows for access to businesses through different means than the traditional access road model. Many states, such as Florida, feed traffic onto and off of highways using controlled access to the freeway via arterials roads rather than continuous frontage or access roads. This alternative with controlled access is the least invasive (has minimal footprint and right of way costs, less impact to the Edwards Aquifer, etc.), is likely the most affordable to construct, and it cannot be tolled which is the desire of the majority of those using 281! So this option has great potential. The current surface need not be totally destroyed and rebuilt to accommodate additional lanes – main lanes (tolled and non tolled) and frontage roads to satisfy some distorted view of providing equivalent free lanes. Therefore the cost of this option can be much less than all other options. The drawbacks presented by the RMA can well be considered as positives for this option. Though, as presented by the RMA, a high number of driveways would lose freeway access, the plan would still give access to those businesses using different methods (see above). Some may also argue that this alternative may not handle future growth, but the RMA's own presentation says the corridor has a "low existing and forecasted population (2035) and employment density north of Loop 1604." One extra lane each way and overpasses were projected to handle the future growth through 2030 in the original plan for 281 improvements that were supposed to be built in 2003. Alternative #2 - Expressway plan - This is almost identical to the original freeway expansion plan for 281 that has been promised to the public since hearings in 2001. However, there is a still a big difference in footprint and cost between a tolled and non-tolled scenario. The original plan had two extra main lanes (one in each direction) and four lanes of access roads (2 on each side). The access roads were only where needed, not continuous. In a tolled scenario, there would have to be up to 6 lanes of access roads and continuous frontage roads for the whole 8 miles to the county line in order to convert an existing freeway into a toll road. So I would like to see the non-toll scenario for this alternative explore a reduced footprint to shed cost and have less adverse environmental impacts than the tolled scenario necessitates. Alternative #3 - Elevated expressway plan - This option has so many adverse impacts it's hard to recommend it to advance to the next level for study. Elevated roadways bring deafening noise levels, extremely high construction costs,</p>		

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Cont. 52	aesthetic and safety issues (some due to such limited access which inhibits emergency vehicles getting access to accidents victims, etc. and others due to the possibility of high speed elevated cars crashing onto the roadways and neighborhoods below). This option is also easily tolled and makes getting on and off difficult due to extremely limited access. Managed lanes "Managed lanes" is code for "toll lanes" where the government "manages" (rather, manipulates) the flow of traffic by limiting access through taxation. It can also choose a method of tolling that determines how many cars can access the toll lanes. Using variable or congestion tolls, the RMA will kick cars off the lanes by jacking-up the toll rates in real time if the traffic on the new lanes slows too much. The toll varies based on the time of day you use the road. So if you have to use the toll lanes during peak hours when everyone has to go to work, you'll pay a premium tax. This is known as "congestion tolling" that they call "congestion pricing." This so called "user fee" is a government imposed new tax for driving our publicly-funded roads. In several proposed scenarios on 281, the tax will be imposed on existing right-of-way already paid for, a double tax!		
53	The alternatives presented relied upon vague generalities rather than specifics. While we acknowledge, each alternative is in the beginning stages of development, the public lacked the information needed in order to properly weigh the various options. Without construction cost estimates, construction timelines, estimated proposed toll rates (and how many lanes would be tolled versus not tolled), entrances and egresses (in both tolled and non-tolled scenarios), or proposed sources of funding, the public found it hard to give feedback on the options and certainly made it difficult to determine the potential preferred alternative. It's like trying to hit a target in the dark. Also, the validity of the data presented for each alternative is questionable and runs afoul of other data. For instance, the RMA claimed the average travel speed on US 281 in peak traffic is 25 mph and that the average speed 30 years from now after building overpasses and two new lanes (one in each direction) on US 281 would yield a net loss in travel speed to 20 mph. Yet, in its "expressway" alternative, that also had overpasses and two new lanes, it claims the average speed in peak traffic would be 45 mph. The Metropolitan Planning Organization-approved (MPO) original freeway improvement plan for US 281 north of Loop 1604 (in the MPO's TIP from 1999 to mid-2004 that previously had NEPA hearings and public support) demonstrated two new lanes and overpasses would handle the future anticipated growth for the US 281 corridor. But now the single RMA alternative that cannot be tolled is basically construed to be inadequate to handle the "growth." Then, the RMA's data shows that only 25,000 less cars would use a tolled expressway (185,000) as compared to a freeway (210,000) or roughly a 12% difference. When its own traffic and revenue studies previously showed 35-40% of cars would not take the tolled expressway but would have to use the non-toll access	Email	Specific Response see Section 5.2

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Cont. 53	<p>roads, these figures are questionable at best. Even more suspect is its claim 86% of the traffic would take managed toll lanes versus a free expressway. When most managed lane projects around the state are doing good to see 8% of the traffic pay to use managed lanes, the differences between the RMA's projections and the reality are staggering. Most all projected traffic on toll roads are based on what amounts to speculation. No one knows what economic factors will change in 30 years. No one knows how travel patterns, employment patterns, development patterns, etc. will change in the next 30 years. Even based on what we do know, the new version of tolling (tolling existing freeways/rights of way) are vastly underutilized due to high toll rates, resistance to tolling, and availability of adjacent free expressway lanes. Also, few of these toll projects are self-sustaining (most need massive public subsidies, including our gas tax money, so whether you take the toll roads or not, we're all paying for them which is a double tax and unnecessary tax burden) and have no business being built. Given the data presented, the RMA skewed the potential feedback to favor its preferred alternative, the expressway option, over the other alternatives. Since there may be non-toll sources of funding for a smaller footprint versus a larger one, since costs to commuters in tolled versus non-tolled scenarios vary greatly therefore impacts vary greatly, and since the least invasive alternative has fewer potential adverse environmental impacts because this project traverses the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, the sole source of drinking water for a city of nearly 2 million, cost is an enormous factor in determining the preferred alternative and no such information was presented. Such factors need to be considered before determining the preferred alternative. It is our understanding that the preferred alternative will already be identified in the Draft EIS by the next round of hearings without the public ever having the opportunity to weigh any meaningful information about the various alternatives (including meaningful information about both tolled and non-tolled scenarios for each alternative). The overpass/expansion alternative utilizes traffic management techniques new to many Texans and has the potential to meet the purpose and need with less cost to commuters (no toll taxes) and less damage to the environment. Proper explanation of these new methods is key to educating the public about this alternative. Not only was that not done, the facilitator in my small group actually spoke negatively multiple times about alternative #1 when the public feedback had been generally positive. The facilitator said more stop lights could plague the freeway in the future under this alternative. However, there are other ways for this alternative to upgrade US 281 to a controlled access highway without continuous access roads and the expense of access rights (ie - give access through backage or arterial connections). How the final proposed alternative #1 (overpass/expansion alternative) gets developed may torpedo a great solution if the most affordable/workable options for how to implement</p>		

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Cont. 53	it aren't advanced. For instance, buying up access rights may cause the cost to skyrocket when backage or arterial road solutions could be much more affordable and make this a potential preferred alternative. Expressway alternative #2 needs to explore continuous versus discontinuous access roads (and analyze/present cost info for each). Under a non-tolled scenario, continuous access roads are not required as they are under state law for a tolled scenario. Also, a tolled alternative cannot meet the purpose and need since it doesn't ultimately solve the congestion problem on US 281 (which also means it will fail to address air quality/non-attainment issues). It simply displaces the traffic to access roads and neighborhood streets, making neighborhoods less safe and adversely affecting property values and quality of life. Non-compete agreements also ensure congestion remains on free routes, so this again makes a tolled scenario fail to meet the purpose and need of the project.		
54	Consider underpasses at Encino Rio, Evans, and Stone Oak with possibility of constructing more further north. Through traffic could travel unimpeded on the underpasses in either 6 or 8 lanes, depending on traffic modeling with realistic future loads. Access road would be at grade and would be two lanes on each side of the highway. Do not fund this project with tolls. Demand that Texas gas taxes go 100% towards TxDOT and recoup losses going ten years back. If you can't do that, then you need to disband the Alamo RMA, because you are simply a money pit and are of no use to the citizens of San Antonio. We have paid you too much for you to turn around and tax us some more.	Email	2, 4, 26
55	Just want to add my comment on tolls. Please consider a non toll plan. My family can't afford much, and tolls would strap us for gas, food money and such....	Email	2
56	We do not want tolls on 281! A toll road will not solve congestion or adequately handle future growth, it will only push the congestion to the access roads and neighborhood streets, making our roads less safe and doing nothing to address air quality. Therefore the alternative doesn't meet the purpose and need of the project. We constantly hear that there will be a choice: "You can pay and drive on the toll road or you can drive on the 'free' lanes". Well the 'free' lanes turn out to be the frontage roads and that wouldn't be any different than what we currently have. I don't think any of you take the frontage road when driving from say I-35 and 1604 to Rittiman do you? Of course not, then call the free lanes what they are-Frontage Roads-why try to disguise or spin it except that you know if you called the 'free' lanes frontage roads you would have more backlash from the casual uninformed citizen.	Email	2, 5, 10

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57	Please no tolls! With all the growth in this area and all the added taxes, there should be funds to construct additional roads and overpasses - just like is done in the rest of San Antonio where there are no tolls. It is illegal to use a portion of the existing public road, and especially its right-of-way that was already approved and funded in previous years for an expanded Hwy 281 for a toll road. The traffic flow in the entire North Central SA area should be considered, including expansion of 281, but also Loop 1604, Bulverde Road, Evans Road, etc. Immediately improve the intersection of 281 and Evans at the Eastern side - add a lane to turn South from Evans onto 281.	Website	2, 21, 34
58	The intersections on 281 N, that have stop lights, should have the left turn lights on at the same time to cut down on light time on 281. That was the way it was 10 years ago before the infamous RMA got involved. This super-street is just a stall to get to 2012 (and defer costs that toll roads would cost to bring down there cost numbers) and the Austin bureaucrats get another chance to promote toll roads, which is what RMA is interested in. I wish you would for the commuter instead of servicing the politicians.	Website	2, 12, 17
59	Any serious consideration to eliminate access or frontage roads is seriously short sighted and an affront to all of the planning existing taxpayers and stakeholders along 281 have made while waiting for the powers that be to deliver on their responsibility to provide safe and effective roads and highways. We have paid gas taxes for years. What and who has spent this money on things other than our roads. If all you are doing is trying to get people from point A to B, without creating access to all of the properties and taxpayers in the affected area, just put in a train track.	Website	4, 10, 11
60	I am opposed to toll roads on highways 281 and 1604. I am in favor of overpasses or other options that don't include tolling the motorist.	Website	2
61	I do not believe in toll roads. Especially 281. I find this to be a form of discrimination as I do not have to pay a toll to drive to my home as the residents along 281 will have to. I would rather support a dedicated tax on gasoline to be used strictly and only for our roads.	Website	2
62	I'm unable to attend the meeting tonight, but I just spent some time looking through all the PDFs and presentation documents. To me, it's clear that the (non-elevated) Expressway option will meet most needs (traffic speed, traffic capacity, access to businesses and side streets, efficient interchanges, plenty of entrance and exit ramps) and has fewer negatives (lower profile, less noise, etc.) than the other options. Regarding funding, obviously a non-toll version of the Expressway option would be ideal. But if that would delay construction significantly, I would fully support managed or toll options to get this project started ASAP.	Website	10

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63	I, too, feel that, we, citizens/taxpayers are never listened to. I suggest the overpasses be put into place "immediately" rather than the "Superstreets", this will keep 281N flowing without snags of Red Lights. It is good for the Environment because it keeps the cars moving rather than idling wasting gas and giving off fumes, not to mention that some cars leak oil over our Edwards Aquifer.	Website	17
64	Be it understood that I favor all options for the 281 project be non-tolled. Tolling the 281 corridor in any manner or capacity will abridge my right to travel and place an undue burden on my finances. I would rather suffer the congestion caused by poor city planning (at the behest of commercial interests) than to suffer further injury and indignation by the city, county, state and its agents so that these same entities may further profit at public expense.	Website	2
65	I was at the meeting on the 29th. You had a lot of nice maps & pictures all great but that was a big expense. Overpasses should have been built yrs ago when the money was allotted, but was spent no one knows where. By waiting some business were allowed to build & now we have to pay to remove them. The smart street project is just a big waist of \$6 mil. which could have been put to overpasses. All these meetings & brochures etc. plus people to man these meeting are a big expense that could have been used towards the road. Toll roads are out no. No elevated hwy either, as this would really effect the local business. Also need 281 & 1604 fixed. Was told at the meeting that yrs ago the engineers said there would not be much growth No. of 1604. Well here we are. Also was told at the meeting that the projections till 2035 the growth would not be that great either. Whoever comes up with this needs to live out this way for awhile & ck. the growth & land still available. Don't know the hang up for overpasses. 410, 37 and any major hwy all have overpasses which makes a lot of since.	Website	2, 10, 11, 17, 24, 25, 27
66	Although I think that construction in this area will cause considerable inconvenience, I believe that overpasses should be built to alleviate the current traffic issues that have arisen with the overdevelopment of the 281N corridor and surrounding areas. (Besides, how can you have stoplights on an interstate highway!?!)	Website	10, 11
67	I think people pay enough taxes that toll roads shouldn't be considered for 281. I personally prefer alternative #1, the overpass expansion plan. Overpasses and an extra lane in each direction would significantly cut traffic without the need to charge ridiculous toll fees on already paid for roads.	Website	2, 4, 10, 11
68	It's the same for the 1604/Sea World/151 area. Why is everyone wasting money on more roads when we need a train systems?	Meeting Evaluation	7
69	Great location! Displays were outstanding. Didn't stay for meeting.	Meeting Evaluation	Comment Noted

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
70	Except/no idea where was/no signs big enough telling locations/ streets. Vague as to projected cost/told 3 - 15 year before maybe complete. Great! Presenters were open-minded and on task.	Meeting Evaluation	Comment Noted
71	Facilitators/scribes needed better "customer service" training. 2 facilitators disagreed on construction timing.	Meeting Evaluation	Comment Noted
72	Most people seem more concerned about the toll issue as opposed to the different alternatives. More info on how to impact the toll decision needed to make a better decision.	Meeting Evaluation	2
73	I use 281 every day, every day of the week at least once, and traffic is becoming very difficult to navigate. It's becoming very, very congestive on this road and I highly recommend -- I highly recommend an elevated expressway for the future and I recommend that we get on this as soon as possible before the traffic doubles or triples in the next few years.	Court Reporter	10
74	There seems to be a disconnect between what we see is happening and what we're told is happening like about the money because we -- whether the funds are there or not, we don't know. We see construction all around town everywhere, big huge projects like the 281-410 interchange, the Bandera Road elevated highways and, you know, the 410 improvements, which are great. We all need those. But this is just as important, too, and probably more important than Bandera elevated highway. And we're told that there is funds for every other project everywhere else except here and it just doesn't make sense to us. We don't want a toll road. We want the -- we want an extension of the expressway that already exists. It just makes sense for all of the businesses out here, for the growth, now with the huge monster -- you know, the golf course out here. I'm sure that they're probably reconsidering their choice of building sites because of this. And we just want it. And it almost appears -- Our perception is that this is almost a vendetta now because it's like the powers that be, the ones that do the voting, it's like they have made up their mind already. That's our perception. And that they're going -- they want a toll road no matter what because we've caused so much trouble for them that they've decided they're going to make us suffer. And it's like a standoff that we're going to see who suffers more. So until Thornton is willing to put a toll road in front of his house and -- not just him, but everybody else that is going to be voting on this decision, until they're willing to do it first, I just have no faith in them.	Court Reporter	2, 10, 28, 35
75	I just want to know why that they are not using the overpasses when the money was appropriated for that and not used the way they're doing. It's going to be a waste of time because if you have to go up and turn around and come back, it's going to be a waste of time and I feel there's no reasons. It would be much, much cheaper to use the overpasses instead of what they're proposing.	Court Reporter	17, 24

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76	I've looked at the three alternatives. I like number 1 because it says no toll. Number 2 or number 3 would be acceptable, but no toll. I don't like the idea of a toll. We've paid enough taxes, gas taxes, license plates, other things. A toll isn't justified.	Court Reporter	2, 4
77	I've lived in Timberwood Park for 17 years and my comments are that I like your proposition number 1. However, in the meantime, I think it'd be wise if you would put three lanes on each side beginning at Borgfeld Road down to Stone Oak. And if you did that, you know, right away, you've got plenty of room to do that and it could be done. It'd relieve the traffic in the meantime until you start all this. And one other suggestion I have is when you're over going north and you hit the Borgfeld Road light, if you would put one lane all the way through, people would not have to park and you could put those pegs up so you could go all the way north past Borgfeld to Bulverde.	Court Reporter	Comment Noted
78	My general comment, and make it all caps, no tolls. No managed lanes. Nein, n-e-i-n, nyet, n-y-e-t, no. Keep it non tolled! Exclamation point.	Court Reporter	Comment Noted
79	My comments are that Highway 281 does not need to be a toll road of any kind. I believe that by building overpasses and easement, you know, lanes where people can get off and remove all the stop lights that are in place currently like at Evans and Stone Oak, then the flow of traffic will be smooth and get through much quicker. I think option number 1 that is a non toll is better than 2 or 3 which would be managed or tolled. I think HOV lanes are good because that allows people to travel with numerous -- like buses, cars with numerous people, to use that. I think that's important. I think that they need to have longer exit lanes for turning left or right because short ones create bottlenecks. I firmly believe that there's money for all the roads available, that they don't need to issue bonds to pay for the roads because if you want a toll road, you got to have bonds and who's going to pay for it if it goes bankrupt? The taxpayer. We're paying for it already, for the road, with our gasoline taxes and our taxes. So we don't need another tax. And poor people can't afford a toll road anyhow. So very few people would use the toll roads. I think, overall, the elevated access ramps like at 410 where you can get on east or west could be done to 1604 the same way so that there's not those bottlenecks trying to go onto 1604 because of the red lights. If you had the overpasses there, then they can get exiting into those traffic lanes much more easily. So I'm against toll roads. I know a lot of people that are in our subdivision and have expressed the same opinion, that the toll roads are not needed. That all we have to do is build the roadways with overpasses. So I believe that, you know, the people should need -- need to be allowed to vote on what they want and that has never been brought forward. And if they would, they would find out more about what people feel what they want. But I know that of the people that I've talked to, they're against it.	Court Reporter	2, 16, 29

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80	<p>I live in Comal County off of Highway 46 West. I'm looking at the -- I'm here at the Public Meeting Number 3, U.S. 281 Environmental Impact Statement, and I've looked at the alternatives, alternative 1, 2 and 3, and I've looked in the brochure that I was given and I looked at the superstreet. To me, the best alternative is Alternative Number 1, the overpasses, to build the overpasses. Alternate 2 is not a -- to me, not viable because it could be -- too easily be turned into a toll road, managed lane, toll road, and we don't want that. We don't want that here. We didn't ask for it here. Alternate 3 also toll ways, managed lanes. We didn't ask for that either. The money was there to build the overpasses and, for some unknown reason, money has been diverted through some means and possibly may not be there anymore, but that's not our fault. That's someone else's fault. And that money needs to be returned to build those overpasses. The superstreet, on paper, it looks good, but they're adding more stoplights. You know, not only will -- like the Evans, for example. Not only would it be that stoplight there, but there'd also be a stoplight at the turnaround. So there'd be two stoplights on the northbound side and two stoplights on the southbound side. So you're still -- you're adding another stoplight. It may not be as long as the one long stoplight, but combined, it might be just as long. So there may be an Alternate 4, which would be similar to the superstreet, but instead of making the -- the two-lane turnaround close, put the two-lane turnaround maybe a half mile further and instead of having a stoplight there, build a two-lane turnaround overpass, two-lane turnaround overpass on the southbound side and, likewise, on the northbound side but further away. As depicted in the superstreet, but just further away, half mile further south, half mile further north. And so where that two-lane overpass makes, like, a big swooping U-turn will then form their own two lanes to head back to the -- the main connector such as Evans or if -- you know, if enough distance is given, you know, to the north and to the south, it could even then swoop back -- those two lanes could then swoop back and then connect to the actual three lanes that are there right now. Swerve those within half time to then go to the -- to move to the access -- two lanes to the access -- the off ramp in the superstreet design that could then, you know, turn and make that and so where there could just be that stoplight right there at the access road where it meets that in case people want to go through that intersection such as Evans and head further south on the access, maybe to go to a business or something or to get back on 281 south. And, likewise, going south, put a two-lane overpass to the inside. That way, it's only the -- The overpass is only going over the main travel lanes on the -- on the opposite side of the freeway. And then if it's further enough to the south, it could also make a sweeping move to where it comes back and to where there's no stoplights at all on the main lanes anymore. There's only one stoplight at each. Say, for instance, on the Evans, it would be only one stoplight in case people want</p>	Court Reporter	4, 12, 17, 24

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Cont. 80	<p>to go through the Evans Road access road intersection, there would be a stoplight right there. 'Cause, otherwise, if you're turning right, there could be a yield sign. And, likewise, on the -- and that would happen on the eastbound side and the westbound side where there's just one stop on each side. Then the main lanes would just keep on going. There wouldn't be any stoplights because the people -- it would be no crossing right there, just as in the superstreet. There would be no crossing from Evans going across 281. So there would be no need for a stoplight right there 'cause traffic would not get on right there. Traffic would get on from Evans and someplace they would have to turn right, but no need for a stoplight because they'll just merge in with the traffic, with the main lanes and just have it swooping enough to where it's -- they have plenty of time to get onto it. So option 4 is a better alternative than option 2 and 3. Option 1, of course, is just build the overpasses because they had the money and the thievery has to stop. Use the gas tax money for what it's intended to be and that's for the highways. They're not for the special interest groups, not for roadside parks, not for hike-and-bike trails. They're not to go to Texas A & M research projects, not to go for VIA buses, not to go to Austin transit service. That gas tax money should be built for highways, period. You know, not for hike-and-bike trails, you know, not for curbs, putting in some curb thing or a special bricklaying things in some special district in Houston in Harris County. Use that gas tax money for what it's intended and stop giving it to the schools, too. Highways. Overpasses. Build it and they will come. Build the overpasses and people will be happy. Stop misusing those funds and use them for what they're intended because -- And the stoplights on 281 right now, instead of having at Evans -- for example, I've called so many times about that Evans Road stoplight. The westbound -- the westbound side of Evans Road. That's on a timed basis. I go through there nearly at midnight Monday through Thursday and that light changes to -- back to red after about two or three cars go. After about eight seconds, that automatically turns back because it's on a good sensor, but then, automatically, it goes to the other side even if there's no cars and they get a green light on Evans Road facing and heading eastbound. They get a light for a full 20 seconds. It used to be 30 seconds, but they retimed it to 20 seconds. If there's no car there, that light should not turn green for Evans Road. Retime that light, redo the sensors in that light where it doesn't give them a green light if nobody's there because this is happening at midnight and people don't want to be stopping here along -- And now -- and now at Encino Rio, same thing is happening there. No car is there at Encino Rio heading -- heading west and getting onto 281 north or south and -- but yet the light will turn green for them. That needs to stop because for years it's been censored, but now it's -- all of a sudden it's on a timed thing. Maybe it's sensors. Go fix it. People are tired of this, you know. We're traveling at midnight. There</p>		

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Cont. 80	<p>shouldn't be any traffic there. We should be going 50 miles an hour, 55. We shouldn't be coming to a screeching halt. And because TxDOT and the City want to mistime this where people are pissed all times of the day. There's an example. When I picked up a friend last year from the airport, Friday afternoon, 3:05, I'm heading south on 281. There's hardly any traffic. Traffic is moving heading northbound. I picked my friend up at the airport, we're returning about 5:05 Friday afternoon. It wasn't on any holiday weekend or anything. I'm traveling 55 miles an hour. The traffic -- And I just called a couple nights before about the timing of these stoplights and, apparently, some new person with TxDOT, apparently, went out there and fixed it because at 5:05 on a Friday afternoon, I'm coming through there and I'm not stopping. Traffic is moving 55 miles an hour gorgeously through Encino Rio, through Evans Road, 55 miles an hour, all the way through. It's not until I get stopped at the Stone Oak stoplight, but I'm, like, five cars from the lead and -- but the traffic's not all congested because somebody, with all those complaints I've given about the timing of these lights, I've been -- I guess somebody went out there and fixed it. I'm sure that they were reprimanded for doing so, were fired for doing so because it never has happened since. That was on -- at 5:05 p.m. on a Friday afternoon. No congestion. Traffic was moving because the stoplights, for one time, for one day, they were timed right. They can do it again. Thank you. And that's my comment. Do what the public wants. No toll road.</p>		
81	<p>My opinion is that the number 2 would be the best because I like to drive slower and I wouldn't have to drive on the fast lanes. The access roads would be ideal for areas where I drive from 306 all the way into town. And we've got a lot of people that are low income in my area and if they made it a toll road, it would be almost impossible because they drive back and forth two or three times a day. An estimated cost of the other meetings we were at was \$10. That would be \$30 per day.</p>	Court Reporter	2
82	<p>I live out 281 and I, too, think the number 2 is the best alternative, but they need to -- right in further of this, as they're building or while they're building this thing, they need to write in there no toll roads and they need to put it in as a law or mandate it, that it's to be a non tolled road area. Where they fund this, the State's got a lot of money in taxes, free tax money they're getting off of lottery tickets and lottery. They can squeeze out some more money for that, but I think it needs to be mandated that they do not use that new road and try to toll it. 'Cause it's just too much money. It costs too much money for our cars to go back and forth.</p>	Court Reporter	2

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83	<p>Many concerns about this whole operation, this meeting that we're doing tonight. I have been to meeting after meeting after meeting for years now. Fighting this whole operation for, I guess, at least eight years, possibly nine and when all we need is overpasses. If the same type of road structure works inside of 1604, why would not the same structure work outside of 1604? If it works in Comal County at 1863 and 281 and 46 and 281 and anywhere else there's overpasses, just put our overpasses in that we have paid for. We're still being told that the money is not in place to build our overpasses. Then I say our governor and our legislature needs to call for hearings and find out where our money has been squandered and find the money, prosecute those who have squandered the money and build our roads that we have paid for. We're looking at some drawings here at this meeting of these Cadillac road structures including an elevated system, which I don't understand why we're even considering an elevated road structure when the cost of that would be so astronomical, but yet we're being told that we can't even pay for overpasses. Again, it appears that our tax dollars have been squandered again for the cost of the design, the drawing, the preliminary engineering to draw this elevated structure. Total waste of my tax dollars. And if you could also pass on to Mr. Perry that he could be a hero to all of us who live in this area that use 281 everyday, that he could be our hero if he would just tell TxDOT focus on 281, get the overpasses put in. But at this point, myself, my family, my friends, I do not know one person that live out this direction that frequents 281 that is going to vote for Governor Perry this election. Pass that on to him. He could be a hero. But he may end up being a loser this election because he's ticked too many people off and we just can't, in good conscious, vote for him 'cause that would be condoning the way he has squandered this entire operation that we have been fighting him for eight years now. My last comment is just please stop wasting our tax money and do the right thing. If you can't, leave your office and we'll find someone else who can do the right thing.</p>	Court Reporter	2, 4
84	<p>I think that the third plan for proposition would have a negative effect on home values in the area because of the traffic, the noise. The noise would have a negative effect on the local commerce because the cars driving on the ramp, on the elevated ramps, would not have ready access to the local commerce. They would bypass it. So that could affect the commercial property values.</p>	Court Reporter	10, 20
85	<p>I'm going to tie into his. The elevated alternative would negatively affect the residential property value.</p>	Court Reporter	Comment Noted

Reference # (Please see Appendix E to search for a comment by name and the associated Reference #.)	Comment	Method Comment was Received	Response (Please use this number to find the associated comment response immediately below this table in Section 5.)
86	<p>A couple of things that I have not heard discussed, one of them which I think is -- is ludicrous not to evaluate is the impact on tourism. Because I hear tourists go to other cities and other states where they have toll roads, they don't have a toll tag. And so when I'm driving up in Austin or Dallas, I don't take a toll because I don't have a toll tag. And all the stories you hear about getting tagged incorrectly, charged incorrectly, because you don't have a toll tag, there's, obviously, a penalty for doing that and it really, really discourages tourism. And the City of San Antonio depends on tourism. That's our number one industry. So I don't see why we are discussing toll roads if we have not even considered its impact on tourism. And it's not on any of the literature, it's not on any discussions. I have to bring it up in the meetings. And, secondly, in any of these evaluation points, they never say cost. They never say a cost as part of the issue and why we're discussing this. I guess it's kind of implied, but why wouldn't there be a question, you know, what about cost? How does this affect the cost? Since money is an issue, since financing these projects is an issue, why shouldn't cost be front and center, then, in consideration this? And each option should have a cost evaluation up front so the people -- the residents, the community, can decide easier as far as cost goes. So those are the two main issues. Tourism -- Impact on tourism regarding toll roads and the fact that tourists will not take a toll road because there's a toll tag. It says easy tag only. They can't just go up to the booth and pay for it. And the other one is upfront cost evaluation in these meetings.</p>	Court Reporter	22, 30, 31

5.0 OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

5.1. General Comments and Responses

As noted in **Section 4**, if a comment was submitted multiple times or several comments were related in topic, the comments were grouped logically and a general response and associated **Response #** was given to each comment in **Table 2**. Each group of comments is labeled as **General Comment** with the associated **General Response** immediately following.

General Comment 1: How will local and regional land use plans be considered in the EIS?

General Response 1: The EIS will consider existing and future land use within and surrounding the US 281 project corridor including local government plans and policies that may help shape the land use along US 281, as well as the potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts that each alternative may have on land use. In addition, the Alamo RMA has and will continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies that contribute to land use planning in the San Antonio area.

General Comment 2: What funding options are being considered for improvements to US 281?

General Response 2: US 281 from Loop 1604 to Borgfeld Drive is an integral part of the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization (SA-BC MPO) *Mobility 2035*, which is the region's long-range metropolitan transportation plan (MTP). The MTP was adopted by the SA-BC MPO on December 7, 2009 and updated in October 2011. The project is included in *Mobility 2035* as a six-lane toll expressway with non-toll outer lanes (i.e., frontage roads) and non-toll direct connector ramps at the northern half of the US 281 interchange with Loop 1604. The project is shown in *Mobility 2035* to have an estimated cost of \$521,513,685 in year-of-expenditure (YOE) dollars.

The MTP allocates Category 2 (Texas Mobility Fund) funding to this project in Fiscal Years (FY) 2013 through 2020 in the total amount of \$112,220,000. Other sources of funding for this project identified in the MTP include bonds and federal loans. Additional non-toll sources of funding may be allocated to US 281 improvements by the MPO's governing body, the Transportation Policy Board, in future MTP updates or amendments. The project is also included in the FY 2011 – 2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP was unanimously approved by the MPO Transportation Policy Board at their meeting on May 17, 2010. The project was subsequently included in the FY 2011-2014 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TxDOT, September, 2010). This document is available at <http://www.sametroplan.org/Plans/TIP/tip.html>.

Both non-toll and toll funding and/or financing options for US 281 transportation improvements will be considered during the EIS process. The EIS must be consistent with the MTP in order to advance the project to a Record of Decision (ROD) from FHWA. If the recommendation for the Selected Alternative is different from what is included in the MTP, there are two options to ensure consistency: (1) an amendment to the MTP that reflects the recommendation for the Selected Alternative or (2) the recommendation for the Selected Alternative would have to be revisited within the EIS.

Toll roads have the potential to disproportionately affect low-income populations because a low-income person would have to use a larger percentage of his or her income to pay tolls when

compared to the general population, given the same level of use. The Expressway Alternative and the Elevated Expressway Alternative are being considered for non-toll, toll and managed lane options. Therefore, the US 281 EIS will analyze the potential effects on low-income populations resulting from operation of US 281 with toll and/or managed lanes. The EIS also gives consideration to the toll collection system in terms of right-of-way requirements, how tolls would be collected, and the Alamo RMA's toll policies and procedures.

General Comment 3: Why do we need all the money up front, why can't we build one overpass at a time as funding is acquired?

General Response 3: Pursuing the US 281 Corridor Project as a purely tax-funded facility could require that improvements be constructed in phases based on the annual availability of tax dollars. According to *Mobility 2035*, one of the possible ways to close the gap in transportation funding is to phase projects; that is, look for ways to construct only critical sections of roadway instead of the ultimate build-out in the near term. However, this approach could delay completion of the eight-mile US 281 Corridor Project indefinitely because of funding limitations. Traditional highway funding on a pay-as-you-go basis would also result in higher construction costs should future phases encounter increases in material and labor costs. When phasing of improvements occurs, each construction phase needs to have operational independence in order to advance separately from the other phases, and project sponsors must demonstrate a reasonable expectation for funding for the whole project, as it appears in the EIS document, through consistency with the State Transportation Improvement Plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, or the Unified Transportation Plan.

General Comment 4: I have already paid for US 281 improvements with my gas tax, but it has apparently been diverted to other areas besides Bexar County.

General Response 4: The collection and distribution of federal and state taxes to support transportation improvements are not tied to specific roadways or counties of origin. According to TxDOT's *Project Selection Process* (TxDOT Finance Division, Abridged Seventh Edition, November 2009), "Projects can be financed through a number of sources, including local funding, state funding (revenue from motor fuel taxes, registration fees, etc.), federal funding, debt financing, pass through financing, toll equity and public-private partnerships. Many projects are funded through a combination of resources. At the local level, TxDOT, the MPO, local officials and the public evaluate the project and work together to develop a strong proposal. Local transportation professionals, including engineers, planners and environmental specialists, evaluate the project's viability and environmental implications. Different solutions are evaluated and costs are estimated. TxDOT has 12 funding categories to fund various types of projects. Projects fall under the Statewide Preservation and Safety Program (SPSP) and the Statewide Mobility and Supplemental Transportation Program (SMSTP). Federal funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund, a pool of money generated by federal fuel taxes and other related fees from all 50 states and the commonwealths of the United States. Money from the Federal Highway Trust Fund is allocated to TxDOT based on formulas established by federal transportation legislation. The distribution of these federal funds throughout the state is based on criteria and funding formulas approved annually by the Texas Transportation Commission."

General Comment 5: I'm concerned that if US 281 is tolled more vehicles will choose to use access roads and neighborhood streets.

General Response 5: Alternatives involving tolls on new lanes on US 281 will also include non-tolled frontages roads that will operate in the same manner and with at least the same

number of lanes as existing on US 281 today. As a result, there will be adequate future capacity for motorists on US 281 who chose not to pay a toll and wish to travel the frontage roads. Diversion of traffic onto side roads is not anticipated to be an issue under any of the build alternatives.

General Comment 6: How will air quality be considered in the EIS?

General Response 6: NEPA and the Clean Air Act of 1970 (as amended) require the consideration of the impact highway improvements may have on local air quality. This is accomplished by determining whether or not localized carbon monoxide concentrations would be adversely affected by the proposed improvement. In the Draft EIS for US 281 this will be accomplished in accordance with TxDOT's Air Quality Guidelines 2006. In the Draft EIS you will find a calculated air quality impact for carbon monoxide for each of the alternatives to determine the potential for impacts along US 281. A mobile source air toxics analysis will be completed and documented in the Final EIS for the Preferred Alternative.

The Alamo RMA is focusing on reducing mobile source emissions to improve overall air quality. As you may have noticed, the US 281 Super Street has improved congestion, but the US 281 EIS will develop a long-term solution to the transportation problems along US 281. To further reduce demand on US 281, each build alternative being considered in the EIS includes complementary elements such as bus service, Park-and-Ride facilities, bike and pedestrian facilities, growth management, transportation demand management and transportation system management.

For more information on air quality in San Antonio please visit the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) website. The Natural Resources Department at AACOG addresses air quality issues in this region by bringing together stakeholders from all interests to develop air pollution reduction plans that benefit our quality of life. Some of AACOG's projects to support this initiative include air pollution monitoring, data analysis, emission inventory development, modeling and reporting. To learn more about air quality and health in south Texas please visit www.CleanAirDrive.com.

General Comment 7: Why is public transportation being considered? Will a high speed train system be considered in the EIS?

General Response 7: As with any project going through the NEPA process, we are required to consider all Reasonable Alternatives. On US 281, public transit was not found to be a solution to all existing and future safety/traffic congestion problems. However, it does have a place in the community's tool box to provide mobility, and therefore the design for the US 281 build alternatives has been developed so as not to preclude implementation of high capacity transit at a future time, when additional highway widening might not be feasible or cost-effective.

Light rail was considered in Level 2 of the alternatives evaluation and screening process. It was eliminated for further consideration for the following reasons: (1) there is no existing system to connect to on US 281 south of Loop 1604; (2) the high cost to connect to a possible future system south of Loop 1604; and (3) the relatively low existing and forecasted (2035) population and employment density north of Loop 1604. However, through coordination with VIA Metropolitan Transit all build alternatives would maintain the opportunity for the future addition of high capacity transit and include one or more Park-and-Ride facilities with bus service.

This project addresses improvements along US 281 from Loop 1604 to Borgfeld. As mentioned earlier, public transit alternatives were considered along US 281. However, public transportation or highway improvements to other parts of the region were not addressed as part of this project.

The proposed build alternatives have been created such that they would address potential safety concerns along US 281.

General Comment 8: I'm concerned about impacts to the Edwards Aquifer and my drinking water. How can we improve US 281 with less of an impact to the aquifer?

General Response 8: The Corridor lies within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone as defined by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Corridor transportation improvements must comply with the rules set forth by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality pertaining to development and stormwater quality. The rules state that all storm water runoff must be treated by stormwater facilities to remove a certain percentage of the pollutant load contained within the runoff. Texas Commission on Environmental Quality refers to these pollutants as Total Suspended Solids.

The US 281 EIS Team is considering some innovative water quality and stormwater management approaches for possible application in the US 281 Project Corridor. Stormwater treatment facilities are traditionally comprised of mostly large, ponds that meet the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality requirements, but take up large amounts of valuable land and require heavy maintenance in order to maintain the aesthetics of the pond as well as its function. Most roadways in Texas manage or treat stormwater with collection inlets that convey the stormwater in pipes or box culverts, ultimately releasing it in large, "end-of-pipe" facilities located at the bottom of drainage areas. Conventional construction and storm drain system design typically alter natural hydrologic (water movement) functions by discouraging infiltration and groundwater recharge and increasing runoff flow rate and total runoff volume. The increased runoff flow rates are addressed with detention basins, but they do not address the additional runoff volume. It is this additional runoff volume that used to soak into the ground that is now on the surface and which ultimately has a negative impact on the downstream environmental conditions. The conventional methods are generally unattractive depositories for trash and are oftentimes out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood and community.

Alternatively, "distributed" water quality and stormwater management techniques address the hydrologic changes of impervious cover near the location of the precipitation impact (as opposed to the "end-of-pipe" methods) and make use of a multitude of several smaller Integrated Management Practices located throughout the watershed. Some technical journals refer to these techniques as Low Impact Development. These methods address water quality, runoff rate and runoff volume. Through the use of vegetation, soil amendments and grading they provide more distributed "storage" within the watershed which decreases the downstream impact of an increased impervious cover. These methods focus on Landscape Integrated Design into the overall stormwater management plan. The distributed methods tend to provide a better "base flow" condition to the receiving waterways (duration and frequency) which typically helps the overall habitat value.

With the recent innovations of distributed Integrated Management Practices technology and methodology, new stormwater facilities are being used that meet the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality requirements for Total Suspended Solids removal and also provide a much gentler and aesthetically pleasing environment. These methods have also been approved

to be used within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. These facilities typically require traditional landscape maintenance which would be performed regularly anyway.

Low Impact Development is a basic principle that is modeled after nature with the goal to manage rainfall/runoff at the source using uniformly distributed and dispersed, small, cost-effective stormwater structures and landscape features. Low Impact Development's goal is to mimic the predevelopment hydrology of a project site or property by using design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source. Low Impact Development relies heavily on smarter and advanced technologies because the emphasis of Low Impact Development is to make the land, a project or development sits on, act hydrologically like it was undeveloped land. These sustainable site design techniques also help to minimize or eliminate the need and cost for landscape irrigation.

Low Impact Development designs move the design focus away from a "collect, convey and discharge the runoff as quickly as you can" strategy to one that focuses on "slow down, soak up and spread out" the runoff. This treats stormwater near the precipitation impact instead of passing it onto another downstream parcel of land or stormwater network. The strategy includes, among other things, infiltration ("soak away") trenches, open vegetated road swales, vegetated biofiltration areas, pretreatment media vaults, permeable friction pavement, permeable sidewalks, oil/grease removal, urban forest landscape practices, and soil amendments that store and filter runoff. Typically, this strategy is accomplished at an equivalent or reduced cost over conventional stormwater collection and treatment, and provides increased benefits to communities and the environment. Each Integrated Management Practice has certain strong points or "performance capabilities" that are attractive; some function well in controlling the runoff volume, others help with regulating the peak flow rate, and others help with water quality. The new Low Impact Development strategy is also a great way to "green up" a community, using vegetation to make our communities more attractive.

Simply put, distributed water quality and innovative stormwater management techniques help keep rainwater on site, slowly releasing it, and allowing for natural physical, chemical and biological processes to do their job while avoiding environmental impacts and expensive treatment systems. The associated vegetation and landscaping also offers human "quality of life" opportunities by greening the US 281 Project Corridor, thus contributing to livability, value, sense of place, and aesthetics.

General Comment 9: Why have there been so many environmental studies? Why is an EIS necessary? Why does it take so long? When are we going to see some relief?

General Response 9: In recent history, numerous transportation improvements have been completed and proposed along US 281 within the project corridor. These projects have been evaluated under the NEPA through a series of Categorical Exclusions and Environmental Assessments. The environmental documentation history related to these improvements is summarized in the table below.

Table 3. History of US 281 Environmental Documentation

Highway	Limits	Document Type and Approval*	Approving Authority	Approval Date
US 281	Bitters Road to 2.5 miles north of Loop 1604 (Evans Road)	EA – FONSI	FHWA	August 8, 1984
US 281	Sonterra Blvd. (0.4 mile north of Loop 1604) to 2.5 miles north of Loop 1604 (Evans Road)	EA Reevaluation – FONSI	FHWA	December 11, 2000
US 281	At Stone Oak Parkway	CE	FHWA	June 2, 2002
US 281	At Borgfeld Drive	CE	FHWA	September 5, 2002
US 281	At Loop 1604 Interchange	CE	FHWA	March 31, 2005
US 281	Loop 1604 to Marshall Road	EA Reevaluation – FONSI	FHWA	May 24, 2005 (Approval Withdrawn)
US 281	Evans Road to Borgfeld Drive	EA – FONSI	FHWA	November 8, 2005 (Approval Withdrawn)
US 281	Loop 1604 to Borgfeld Drive	EA – FONSI	FHWA	August 14, 2007 (Approval Withdrawn)
US 281	At Encino Rio Road, Evans Road, Stone Oak Parkway and Marshall Road (“US 281 Super Street”)	CE	FHWA	September 29, 2009
US 281	At Loop 1604 Interchange	CE	FHWA	February 23, 2010

*EA – Environmental Assessment, FONSI – Finding of No Significant Impact, CE – Categorical Exclusion

The US 281 (Loop 1604 to Marshall Road) project was let to construction in September 2005. However, a motion for preliminary injunction was filed by Aquifer Guardians in Urban Areas, and People for Efficient Transportation, Inc. (collectively “AGUA”) on December 21, 2005 seeking to bar further land clearing and construction on the expansion of US 281 north of Loop 1604 because of inadequate consideration of environmental issues. TxDOT prepared and submitted a letter to FHWA on January 10, 2006 requesting assistance in shaping an appropriate course of action in light of the review of the environmental studies on US 281 projects in northern Bexar County. FHWA reviewed TxDOT’s request and concurred that, under 23 CFR § 771.115, TxDOT could proceed with the preparation of a new Environmental Assessment and further concurred with TxDOT’s recommendation that a single Environmental Assessment be completed to address the environmental elements and factors for the project in the US 281 corridor from approximately Loop 1604 to Borgfeld Drive. With FHWA’s concurrence in the initiation of a new environmental document and recognition of issues raised by the public, FHWA withdrew prior environmental clearances on both 2005 US 281 Environmental Assessments, identified in the table above, resulting in the cancellation of construction activities along US 281 from Loop 1604 to Marshall Road. FHWA then directed TxDOT to prepare one

comprehensive Environmental Assessment for the US 281 project area from Loop 1604 to Borgfeld Drive within Bexar County.

The most recent Environmental Assessment project concluded with FHWA's issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact or environmental clearance to proceed in August, 2007. A Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief was filed in February 2008 by AGUA, and Texans Uniting for Reform and Freedom (TURF) in US District Court for the Western District of Texas, San Antonio Division, against FHWA, TxDOT and the Alamo RMA. In October 2008, FHWA decided to withdraw the environmental clearance following TxDOT's announcement regarding irregularities in the procurement of a scientific services contract and calling into question components of the environmental document. FHWA called for the preparation of an EIS for US 281 from Loop 1604 to Borgfeld Drive. The Alamo RMA assumed responsibility for preparing the EIS. An EIS is required in order to maintain federal funding eligibility for US 281 transportation improvements, including any transit improvements that would be federally funded. In a November 10, 2008 letter from the FHWA Division Administrator to the TxDOT Executive Director, FHWA wrote that "the Federal Highway Administration will require that an EIS is required for any future federal transportation project in the US 281 Corridor."

The EIS process will take approximately four to five years to complete. This timeframe is required in order to give full consideration to the project alternatives, to give the joint lead, cooperating and participating agencies adequate time to review all project information, and to fully engage project stakeholders and the public.

Here are some of the project milestones in the process with approximate dates:

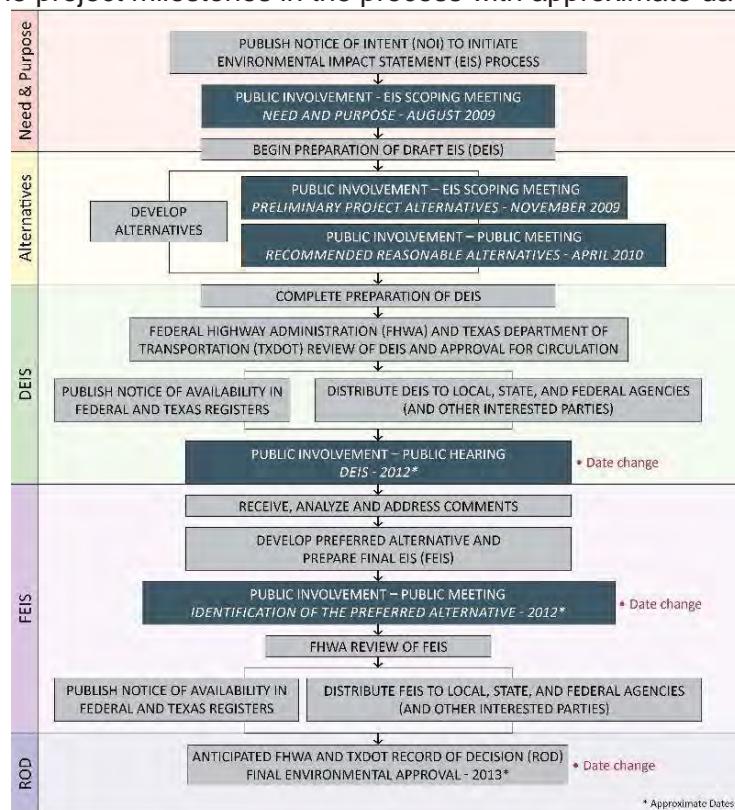


Figure 2 - EIS Process Diagram

If one of the build alternatives is the Selected Alternative and the Record Of Decision has been issued, and assuming that the funding is available the design and construction along the corridor would take approximately three to four years with an estimated completion date of sometime in 2016-2017.

General Comment 10: Which alternatives were carried forward in the process and evaluated in more detail?

General Response 10: Recommendations from the Level 3 evaluation were presented at Public Meeting #3. Based on public and agency comments, the following build alternatives have been identified for analysis in the Draft EIS. According to NEPA, the Alamo RMA must consider the full range of Reasonable Alternatives, which are defined as those that meet the need and purpose. Each of the Reasonable Alternative packages will be developed to include the complementary elements such as bus, Park-n-Ride facilities, growth management, transportation system management, transportation demand management and bike and pedestrian facilities.

The Expressway Alternative is a limited access facility with continuous one-way frontage roads along US 281. It consists of three main lanes and two/three frontage road lanes in each direction. This alternative will be analyzed as non-toll, toll, and managed lane options in the Draft EIS. Non-toll lane options could take the form of frontage road lanes and/or main lanes.

The Elevated Expressway Alternative is an elevated limited access roadway with three main lanes and two/three frontage road lanes in each direction; existing US 281 lanes would remain in place and function as frontage roads. Along the southern section of the roadway, from Loop 1604 north to Stone Oak Parkway, the elevated main lanes would be built on the outside of the existing US 281 roadway and would transition to the west side of the existing US 281 roadway on the northern section north of Stone Oak Parkway to Borgfeld Drive. This alternative will be analyzed as non-toll, toll, and managed lane options in the Draft EIS. Non-toll lane options could take the form of frontage road lanes and/or main lanes.

General Comment 11: I have concerns about Alternative 1. It does not improve the speed enough and many people will lose access to their property.

General Response 11: Alternative 1 has been eliminated from further consideration. The overall intent of the Overpass/Expansion Alternative, as presented at Public Meeting #3, was to develop a “smaller footprint, lower cost” approach to addressing the project’s need and purpose. This alternative proposed new grade separated intersections at Redland Road, Encino Rio, Evans Road, Stone Oak Parkway, Marshall Road, Wilderness Oaks, Overlook Parkway, Bulverde Road, and Borgfeld Drive. The Overpass/Expansion Alternative and the Elevated Expressway Alternative were presented with driveways and side streets colored red in numerous locations and noted that “Direct access may not be allowed as shown due to safety concerns. Further analysis is required to determine safe access solutions. Solutions include frontage roads, backage roads, and purchase of access rights.” In addition to safe access, other measures of effectiveness like peak period travel speed, average daily traffic, and peak period level of service were also lower than the Expressway and Elevated Expressway alternatives. In the months following the April 2010 public meeting the US 281 EIS Team worked to identify safe access solutions and improve mobility performance.

The US 281 EIS Team analyzed two variations of the original Overpass/Expansion Alternative. The original alternative was presented at Public Meeting #3 in April 2010. The first variation

was presented to the Community Advisory Committee and the Peer Technical Review Committee in October 2010. The second variation (February 2011) was presented to the Community Advisory Committee in February 2011, and to the Peer Technical Review Committee in June 2011. Slide presentations made to all Community Advisory Committee and Peer Technical Review Committee meetings are posted to the project Web site, available for viewing at <http://www.411on281.com/us281eis/>.

During the effort to analyze safe access solutions it was determined that the safest and most economical access could be provided by the use of a frontage road in most locations. To incorporate frontage roads throughout the corridor would provide an alternative that was very similar to the Expressway Alternative – Non-toll. After extensive traffic and engineering analysis, the “smaller footprint, lower cost” approach was not able to adequately address the access and mobility needs of the project. This alternative was therefore eliminated from further consideration in the Draft EIS.

General Comment 12: Why can't the timing of the traffic signals along US 281 simply be improved?

General Response 12: The number of cars driving on US 281 during rush hour or peak traffic times overwhelms the function of the traffic signals and repeated efforts to re-time or re-synchronize the signals have not been able to appreciably improve travel speeds or reduce delays. However, one of the benefits of the Alamo RMA's US 281 Super Street project is that it has improved traffic flow by reducing travel times during peak periods between Loop 1604 and Marshall Road. Instead of waiting through multiple traffic signals to turn left, drivers are able to turn right, enter a protected U-turn lane, and when the main lane traffic is stopped, make a left hand turn to get moving. This interim solution will help provide relief from traffic congestion today, and give the Alamo RMA time to complete the Environmental Impact Statement to identify and provide long-term solutions to the congestion within this US 281 corridor. For more information on the Super Street project, please visit www.411on281.com.

General Comment 13: How do the complementary elements such as growth management, transportation system management and transportation demand management (including the creation of more work/live/play planned communities within the US 281 project corridor that could reduce commuting distances) weigh into each alternative?

General Response 13: Strategies to address congestion in the US 281 project corridor are included in *Mobility 2035*. These strategies are described below and are applicable to all alternatives including the No-Build Alternative.

Growth Management

Growth management refers to local and/or regional policy initiatives that are intended to influence the location and density of residential and commercial land uses in the metropolitan area. *Mobility 2035* has adopted a land use scenario that promotes Transit Oriented Development and Infill Development in the San Antonio area as a growth management strategy. As part of the infill strategy, this scenario limits growth outside of Loop 1604 in Bexar County and aims at more efficient land uses that reduce trip lengths.

It should be noted that implementation of these planning actions may vary within the US 281 project corridor. This is because a portion of the corridor is located in the City of San Antonio, from Loop 1604 to approximately Marshall Road, and the unincorporated area north of Marshall

Road is regulated by Bexar County. Unlike the City of San Antonio, Bexar County does not have the power to regulate zoning on land in the county, or the use or appearance of property.

Transportation System Management (TSM)

TSM refers to easily implementable, low capital cost transportation improvements that increase the efficiency of transportation facilities and services. The US 281 Super Street is an example of TSM. Other examples include improved signal management, access management, ridesharing, and incident management programs.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

TDM typically refers to policies and programs that are directed towards reducing single occupant vehicle travel. TDM can be an effective alternative to increasing capacity of a transportation system. Some examples of TDM include area pricing, alternative work schedules, and parking management.

In addition to the strategies highlighted above, the EIS is considering bus, Park-n-Ride facilities, and bike and pedestrian facilities in combination with each build alternative.

These strategies are analyzed in more detail in the Draft EIS.

General Comment 14: Toll roads are grossly overbuilt. We do not need a 20-lane toll road.

General Response 14: The analysis to determine the number of lanes needed throughout a roadway is based on the SA-BC MPO's traffic model for each alternative. There are currently no locations that propose a 20 lane wide cross-section. As an example, the typical cross-section for the Expressway Alternative is three main lanes both northbound and southbound with two to three lane frontage roads. At various locations in the Expressway Alternative, between the entrance and exit ramps, an additional lane was proposed to provide space for cars to safely merge with through traffic. The following figure illustrates a section of US 281 for the Expressway Alternative. In section A-A, there are a total of 14 lanes, eight are main lanes and six are frontage road lanes. In section B-B, there are again 14 lanes, six main lanes, six frontage road lanes, and two ramp lanes.



Figure 3 - Example of the Number of Lanes on US 281

Where the frontage roads approach a major cross-street, such as Evans Road or Stone Oak Parkway, there would be additional lanes proposed as necessary for U-turn and right turn lanes. The analysis to determine the number of lanes needed to accommodate turning movements has not been completed at this stage of the project.

General Comment 15: Why is US 281 being considered for tolling, but not I-35 or I-10? They have much more traffic.

General Response 15: Both non-toll and toll funding and/or financing options for US 281 transportation improvements will be considered during the EIS process. Current state and federal laws and regulations do not allow existing lanes of highways like I-35 or I-10 to become tolled lanes. However, if additional lanes are added to these facilities in the future, tolls could be

defined as an appropriate funding source for this additional capacity based on laws and regulations governing at that time.

General Comment 16: How will High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) and High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes be considered in the EIS?

General Response 16: HOV lanes and HOT lanes are being considered under the managed lane option. Under this option, all main lanes would offer free passage for transit vehicles and car pools that are registered with a tag in place; all other vehicles, unless exempted by Texas State Law, would pay a fixed fee toll, in accordance with Alamo RMA toll policy. The frontage road lanes would be non-toll.

General Comment 17: Questions about the US 281 Super Street, the US 281/Loop 1604 Interchange and the Loop 1604 EIS.

General Response 17:

US 281 Super Street - FHWA has approved the environmental document (a Categorical Exclusion) for proposed operational and safety improvements on US 281 at Encino Rio Road, Evans Road, Stone Oak Parkway and Marshall Road, commonly referred to as the "US 281 Super Street." While not a permanent fix for the congestion on US 281, the Super Street is an interim solution, to provide relief today between Encino Rio Road and Marshall Road, while allowing the work on the US 281 EIS to move forward. Work on the US 281 Super Street started in March 2010 and was completed in fall of 2010. The US 281 Super Street is a separate project from the US 281 EIS; for more information regarding the US 281 Super Street project please visit www.AlamorMA.com.

US 281/Loop 1604 Interchange - As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), also known as the Federal Stimulus program, the Alamo RMA has received \$140 million in funding to construct four non-toll southern direct connectors between US 281 and Loop 1604 on the north side of San Antonio. In April 2010, the Alamo RMA Board of Directors awarded Williams Brothers Construction Company the Design- Build contract. These four connectors will help provide direct access between these two roadways for approximately 50,000 vehicles a day when construction is finished. The US 281/Loop 1604 Interchange is a separate project from the US 281 EIS. For additional information on this project or to submit a comment, please visit www.AlamorMA.com.

Loop 1604 EIS - The Loop 1604 EIS began in 2009 for the portion of Loop 1604 from FM 1957 (Potranco Road) to IH 35 North. Inclusion of the portion of Loop 1604 between US 90 West and Potranco Road (FM 1957) has been added since the first public scoping meetings were held on October 21 and 22, 2009. For more information or to provide comments on this project, please visit www.morefor1604.com.

Each of these projects – the US 281 Super Street, US 281/Loop 1604 Interchange, and Loop 1604 – is a separate project with independent utility. The impacts from each project will be accounted for in the US 281 EIS analysis of indirect and cumulative impacts. The 281 EIS will account for the impacts from the Loop 1604 project that fall within the US 281 resource study areas.

General Comment 18: Why was the Peer Technical Review Committee created?

General Response 18: The Peer Technical Review Committee was created in an effort to continue the partnership with participating and cooperating agencies. The FHWA, TxDOT and

Alamo RMA formed this committee to foster expert oversight and gather input from participating and cooperating agencies at key coordination points throughout the EIS process, including:

- Development of the Need and Purpose to improve the US 281 corridor
- Identification of the range of alternatives for the US 281 corridor
- Collaboration on methodologies to be used
- Completion of the Draft EIS
- Identification and refinement of the Preferred Alternative
- Completion of the Final EIS

The Committee, which is chaired by the FHWA, had its first meeting in November 2009 and will continue to work cooperatively throughout the project to provide input on data and methodologies for the EIS process. Members of the Peer Technical Review Committee include:

- Federal Highway Administration
- Alamo Regional Mobility Authority
- Texas Department of Transportation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Edwards Aquifer Authority
- Bexar County
- San Antonio – Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- VIA Metropolitan Transit
- San Antonio Water System
- City of San Antonio
- Texas Historical Commission

General Comment 19: How will the improvements to US 281 connect with the existing highway near the Comal County Line?

General Response 19: The US 281 improvements would transition back to meet the existing two lanes in both the northbound and southbound direction before reaching the Cibolo Creek bridge crossing at the Bexar/Comal County Line. Transitioning from a controlled access freeway (proposed US 281 Corridor Project) to a highway with fewer lanes will be designed in accordance with adequate safety and design criteria for these circumstances. This will include the placement of signs and speed reductions as appropriate. A similar transition situation occurs today on US 281 between Redland Road and Encino Rio and at other locations around the state where controlled access freeways must be transitioned to highways or arterial roadways.

In addition, the Comal County Major Thoroughfare Plan includes upgrading US 281 to a controlled access freeway immediately north of the US 281 Corridor Project, from the Bexar County line to the Kendall County line.

General Comment 20: Will sound barriers be considered in the US 281 EIS? If so, when?

General Response 20: A traffic noise analysis following the TxDOT Guidelines for Analysis and Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise (April 2011) will be completed along the US 281 corridor in

association with the EIS. This analysis will include the determination of the existing traffic noise levels, the prediction of future (in 2035) traffic noise levels and consideration of noise abatement measures (including noise barriers) for areas where a noise impact occurs. This analysis will be conducted using FHWA's Traffic Noise Model.

The noise barriers proposed in the previous US 281 Environmental Assessment (2007) conducted by TxDOT were withdrawn when FHWA decided to withdraw the environmental clearance. Subsequently, FHWA called for the preparation of an EIS for US 281 from Loop 1604 to Borgfeld Drive.

General Comment 21: Tolling public property, such as the US 281 right-of-way, is illegal.

General Response 21: Texas Transportation Code Section 228.201(a)(4) states that as long as a highway is reconstructed so that the number of non-tolled lanes is greater than or equal to the number of lanes that existed before the toll lanes were added, the project is not considered a conversion of an existing highway to a toll road. Moreover, state law directly prohibits the conversion of an entire, existing road to a toll facility. In other words, the public must have access to the equal number of non-tolled lanes as it had prior to the addition of the tolled capacity. Depending on the location, the current tolled alternatives have 2 or 3 non-tolled lanes in each direction in the corridor. If the US 281 EIS selects a tolled or managed improvement option, there would still need to be at least the same number of non-tolled lanes available to the public as exists today.

The Alamo RMA is following the Texas Transportation Code, cited above, and all the alternatives under consideration for toll or managed lane financing will be in compliance with the section of the law.

General Comment 22: I'm concerned about how the toll facility would be operated. Will there be toll plazas? What happens if someone does not have a toll tag?

General Response 22: If US 281 was developed as a toll road, current policy and design standards will result in the use of technologies which permit motorists to travel on the highway without stopping or slowing down for traditional toll plazas. Instead, gantries (which resemble sign supports over major freeways) would be erected along the route. Toll tag card readers would be hung off these gantries to identify each motorist's toll tag. If a vehicle does not have a toll tag, cameras would focus on the vehicle's license plate and take a picture of just the tag – not the vehicle's occupants. This picture would then be run through an optical character reader, and the license plate would be compared to the DMV database. A bill would then be sent to the owner of the vehicle requesting payment for the tolls.

General Comment 23: I'm concerned about abuses to eminent domain.

General Response 23: Texas Attorney General Gregg Abbott notes: "Under Texas law, eminent domain is the legal authority to take private property for public use. The takings process itself is called condemnation. Effective February 1, 2008, Texas property cannot be taken unless the condemning authority first provides the Landowner's Bill of Rights to the affected property's owners. All rights outlined in this document apply every time any entity uses eminent domain to take a Texas landowner's private property. The Texas Landowner's Bill of Rights consists of 10 basic principles: (1) You are entitled to receive adequate compensation if your property is taken for a public use. (2) Your property can only be taken for a public use. (3) Your property can only be taken by a governmental entity or private entity authorized by law to do so.

(4) The entity that wants to take your property must notify you about its interest in taking your property. (5) The entity proposing to take your property must provide you with an assessment of the adequate compensation for your property. (6) The entity proposing to take your property must make a good faith offer to buy the property before it files a lawsuit to condemn the property. (7) You may hire an appraiser or other professional to determine the value of your property or to assist you in any condemnation proceeding. (8) You may hire an attorney to negotiate with the condemning entity and to represent you in any legal proceedings involving the condemnation. (9) Before your property is condemned, you are entitled to a hearing before a court-appointed panel that includes three special commissioners. (10) If you are unsatisfied with the compensation awarded by the special commissioners, or if you question whether the taking of your property was proper, you have the right to a trial by jury. The Texas Landowner's Bill of Rights, along with an explanation of the condemnation process, is available at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov."

Senate Bill 18 (Truth in Condemnation Procedures Act) was passed by the Texas Legislature in 2011. This bill created new requirements for governmental entities including the Alamo RMA. Among these new requirements are the following:

1. Before starting a condemnation process, the RMA must authorize the initiation of the condemnation at a public meeting with a recorded vote. Such a vote must be included as an agenda item in the usual posted notice for the public meeting.
2. When the RMA makes its initial offer to acquire property, it must disclose by certified mail, return receipt requested, any and all appraisal reports produced or obtained by the RMA within the preceding ten years.
3. Property owners must respond by submitting any and all appraisals used in determining the owner's opinion of value to the RMA no later than the earlier of ten days after receiving the report or the third business day before the special commissioner's hearing.
4. The RMA may not include a confidentiality requirement on any offer or purchase agreement.
5. Before initiating a condemnation proceeding, the RMA must make a "bona fide" offer to acquire the property voluntarily from a property owner. A "bona fide" offer will include the following:
 - a. An initial offer has been made in writing to the property owner,
 - b. A final offer in writing, made at least 30 days after the initial offer is made, must be equal to or greater than the value indicated by a certified appraiser,
 - c. During the offer process, the RMA must provide:
 - i. A copy of the written appraisal;
 - ii. A copy of the deed, easement, or other instrument conveying the property sought to be acquired; and
 - iii. The aforementioned "Landowner's Bill of Rights" statement
6. The property owner has at least 14 days to respond to the final offer before filing an eminent domain petition.
7. Adequate notice (up to 40 days) must be provided prior to holding a special commissioner's hearing. This time will provide both parties the opportunity to strike one of the three commissioners appointed by the judge.
8. The material impairment of "direct access" (defined as ingress or egress on or off a public road, street, or highway) to the property that affects the market value of the

remaining property must be addressed by the special commission, but the commission may not consider any such impairments which are experienced in common with the general community, including circuitry of travel and diversion of traffic.

9. The RMA will have to provide relocation compensation in addition to compensation for land taken or damaged.
10. A property owner shall be provided the right to repurchase real property acquired through eminent domain if the public use for such property is canceled within ten years.

General Comment 24: What happened to the original plan TxDOT proposed in 2000? Why can't you just build the overpasses?

General Response 24: Without environmental clearance in place, we cannot add new capacity (using federal funds) to US 281. The Alamo RMA's US 281 EIS will help regain environmental clearance for new capacity to be added to US 281, provided the EIS ultimately recommends a build alternative. This action could allow for overpasses and new lanes to be built - or any other option for new capacity.

Overpasses with entrance/exit ramps and frontage roads will be considered as an alternative within the EIS process.

Please see General Response 9 for more information on the previous environmental studies.

General Comment 25: Why was this meeting format chosen? The meeting materials seemed so elaborate and costly. Why was this necessary?

General Response 25: This meeting took place in the evening from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The format was an open house, followed by a presentation and a small group exercise. The intent of the meeting format is to provide a free exchange of project views and concerns while accommodating the different ways in which people learn and communicate. The open house format kept everyone informed about the EIS process while allowing attendees to discuss their own comments and questions with a variety of subject matter experts through engaging, two-way dialogues. The presentation provided an explanation for the purpose behind the meeting and all the exhibits on display. After the presentation, attendees were broken into small groups to discuss the information presented in the open house and the presentation in more detail. This exercise provided an opportunity for participants to hear and exchange differing viewpoints with each other and provide input on the need and purpose for improvements to US 281, and a range of alternatives to address growth, improve safety, improve mobility and enhance quality of life in the US 281 corridor.

The readability and understandability of meeting materials is important to engage stakeholders and to gather meaning input. Comments and input received as part of this outreach helped shape the alternatives and impact analysis used in the US 281 Draft EIS.

In light of the specific goal of Public Meeting #3, which is to get a broad spectrum of public input to the NEPA scoping process, the format of this meeting has proven to be effective, and produced a useful record for the project.

After this meeting, there will be a Public Hearing as part of the US 281 EIS that will occur following the release of the Draft EIS. After the public hearing, there will be a public meeting to identify the Preferred Alternative.

There are several ways to stay involved and informed about the US 281 EIS between public meetings including:

- signing up for the E-newsletter (<http://www.411on281.com/us281eis/index.cfm/mailling-list-sign-up/>);
- checking the project website (www.411on281.com/us281eis/);
- asking Alamo RMA staff to come present information on the EIS at an organizational meeting (<http://www.411on281.com/us281eis/index.cfm/speakers-bureau/>); and/or
- following the US 281 EIS on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/411on28>) or Twitter (<http://twitter.com/411on28>).

General Comment 26: Why are overpasses being proposed and not underpasses? Adding an overpass so close to my backyard will lower my property value and affect the view from my house. If this happens, will my home be purchased?

General Response 26: A general engineering analysis was completed at each overpass location to evaluate earthwork, right-of-way, and drainage impacts of using an overpass or an underpass. At all locations, the results of this analysis indicated that an overpass would provide the best option.

The EIS will address potential visual impacts from both of the build alternatives. These impacts will be described from the perspective of individuals with a view from the road (roadways users) and individuals with a view of the road (roadway viewers).

The potential impacts to property values from the US 281 Corridor project will be addressed in the EIS.

Potential residential and commercial displacements that may result from both of the build alternatives will be addressed in the Draft EIS. After a Preferred Alternative is identified a more detailed analysis of displacements will be conducted and described in the Final EIS. This process will be consistent with the requirements in the *Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act*. The Uniform Act contains specific requirements that determine the manner in which a government entity acquires private property for public use when federal funds are used for any phase of a project.

General Comment 27: The presentation mentioned growth projections that seem unrealistic. Where did these numbers come from?

General Response 27: The growth forecasts were supplied by the SA-BC MPO. They included forecasts for the years of 2015, 2025, and 2035. For the study area in Bexar County, outside of Loop 1604, the SA-BC MPO forecasts no additional population growth past 2015, and therefore the population forecasts for that area are the same for all three years.

General Comment 28: Who decides which alternative will be the Preferred Alternative?

General Response 28: As the lead agencies for this EIS, the FHWA, TxDOT and Alamo RMA will identify a Preferred Alternative. To make this decision the joint lead agencies will consider

the full range of direct, indirect and cumulative effects of each of the alternatives (including the No-Build Alternative) considered in the Draft EIS and all public and agency comments received during the review of the Draft EIS. After a Preferred Alternative is identified, it will be presented at a public meeting; and analyzed in more detail in the Final EIS.

General Comment 29: Why can't we vote on how to improve US 281?

General Response 29: It is important to understand that commenting or providing input during the EIS process is not a vote on whether an action should take place or not. However, public input can influence the decisions made during this process. The NEPA requires that project decision makers be informed of the environmental consequences of their decisions.

General Comment 30: Why were costs not included in the meeting information?

General Response 30: Due to the early stage of the EIS at the time of this meeting in April 2010, the alternatives were presented at a conceptual level of detail. The Overpass/Expansion Alternative and the Elevated Expressway Alternative were presented with driveways and side streets colored red in numerous locations and noted that "Direct access may not be allowed as shown due to safety concerns. Further analysis is required to determine safe access solutions. Solutions include frontage roads, backage roads, and purchase of access rights." Once the effort to analyze safe access solutions was further along in the process, the preliminary cost estimates were presented for the build alternatives to the Community Advisory Committee on February 16, 2011, and refined cost estimates will be included in the Draft EIS.

All materials from public meetings and Community Advisory Committee meetings are available on www.411on281.com/US281EIS.

General Comment 31: Does the EIS consider the impact to tourism?

General Response 31: The EIS will consider the existing economic characteristics of the US 281 project corridor and potential impacts to economic conditions. However, the purpose of the US 281 corridor project is to improve mobility and accessibility, enhance safety, and improve community quality of life for all users, including visitors to the San Antonio area.

General Comment 32: Why were improvements to Blanco Road and Bulverde Road eliminated from further consideration in the Draft EIS?

General Response 32: This alternative, as presented at Public Meeting #3, proposed new grade separated intersections on US 281 at Redland Road, Encino Rio, Evans Road, Stone Oak Parkway, Marshall Road, Wilderness Oaks, Overlook Parkway, Bulverde Road, and Borgfeld Drive. Additionally, US 281, Blanco Road, and Bulverde Road were expanded to three lanes in each direction from Loop 1604 to Borgfeld Drive (US 281 in case of Bulverde Road). This alternative was recommended for elimination at Public Meeting #3 due to the following reasons:

- High potential impact to Camp Bullis mission: The widening of Blanco Road, which is adjacent to Camp Bullis, would have a potential for impact to the Camp Bullis mission
- Right-of-way: The total right-of-way for this alternative was much higher as compared to the other build alternatives

- Residential Displacements: This alternative impacted 34 residences along the corridors as compared to none to three residences for the other build alternatives
- Environmental Factors: This alternative had higher impact to other environmental factors such as stream crossings and impervious cover as compared to the other build alternatives

In addition to the above factors that are mostly a result of the widening of Blanco Road and Bulverde Road, there were other measures of effectiveness like peak period travel speed, average daily traffic, peak period level of service, and safe access that were lower than the Expressway and the Elevated Expressway alternative. This alternative was eliminated from further consideration in the Draft EIS after this meeting.

General Comment 33: Is it possible to restripe US 281 to accommodate three lanes in each direction?

General Response 33: No, the existing pavement width is not wide enough to accommodate three lanes in each direction and still have the shoulder width required for an expressway facility.

General Comment 34: Will the traffic flow in north central San Antonio be considered in the US 281 EIS or does it only consider traffic flow on US 281 between Loop 1604 and Borgfeld Drive?

General Response 34: A travel demand model provided by the SA-BC MPO was used to predict how each build alternative would affect traffic patterns in the US 281 corridor. This model includes a network of roadways covering the entire San Antonio region, including US 281, Loop 1604, Blanco Road, Bulverde Road, etc. It also includes all planned improvements in *Mobility 2035*.

General Comment 35: Who decides which projects are funded in the San Antonio area and which ones are not funded?

General Response 35: The SA-BC MPO develops transportation plans and programs that address the needs of the greater San Antonio area. The MPO is led by the Transportation Policy Board and determines how transportation funds should be spent in the region.

Projects listed in the long range transportation plan are selected through the SA-BC MPO's technical analysis and public involvement process. Since the long range plan is a financially constrained plan, projects may only be programmed up to the amount of anticipated funding for the 25-year period covered in the plan.

The transportation infrastructure needs of the region are far greater than future funding amounts anticipated over the next 25 years. Diversions of the State and Federal fuel tax create a significant deficit in the amount of funding available for transportation projects. However, even if these diversions were removed, the SA-BC MPO and its planning partners would still need to continue to find innovative ways to preserve, maintain, and expand the region's transportation infrastructure.

5.2. Specific Comment Responses

If a comment was only brought up by one person or was particularly complex in nature it was given a specific response. This is indicated by "Specific Response see **Section 5.2**" located in the **Response #** column of **Table 2**.

Response to Comment 32: The US 281 EIS Team has coordinated with and will continue to coordinate with VIA throughout the EIS process. For the US 281, public transit was not found to be a solution to all the existing and future safety/traffic congestion problems. However, through coordination with VIA both build alternatives would maintain the opportunity for the future addition of high capacity transit and include Park-n-Ride facilities with bus service.

The EIS is focused on improvements to US 281 between Loop 1604 and Borgfeld Drive and does not address commutes to and from military bases.

The US 281 EIS team has analyzed crash data within the US 281 corridor. Based on this analysis the enhancement of safety has been defined as a purpose for this project. The alternative selected in the EIS will provide a long-term solution to improve mobility and accessibility, enhance safety, and improve community quality of life in the US 281 corridor. While the EIS is being conducted, the US 281 Super Street was constructed between Encino Rio Road and Marshall Road. This project has provided an interim solution that has added turn lanes and improved operations.

Response to Comment 52: In the Overpass/Expansion Alternative (April 2010), the average peak period speeds were 20 mph in the year 2035 as compared to an existing speed of 25 mph today. The existing traffic on US 281 is 90,000 vehicles per day and therefore the facility operates at an average peak period speed of 25 mph. In 2035, the Overpass/Expansion Alternative is projected to carry 170,000 vehicles per day with an average peak period speed of 20 mph.

After this Public Meeting, the US 281 EIS Team analyzed two variations of the Overpass/Expansion Alternative. The first variation was presented to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Peer Technical Review Committee (PTRC) in October 2010. In the October 2010 version the northern section, due to the addition of traffic signals and more vehicle conflicts associated with side streets and driveways, the average peak period speed in 2035 decreased to 12 mph. The second variation (February 2011) was presented to the CAC in February 2011, and to the PTRC in June 2011. This revised alternative still substantially underperformed the Expressway and Elevated Expressway Alternatives. Slide presentations made to all CAC and PTRC meetings are posted to the project web site, available for viewing at <http://www.411on281.com/us281eis/>.

There are a number of driveways that exist or are permitted today that currently serve many of the properties and businesses along US 281 and provide them with direct access to the highway. Changing this access in such a way that it is removed completely from US 281 and only provided via arterial roads would be viewed as damaging to the value of the property and could involve substantial payments for damages in many instances. In other locations like Florida, freeways are often built without driveways being permitted to adjacent properties. The US 281 EIS Team examined options to provide access along US 281 via roadways or other alternative methods. Under such an approach, traffic on the arterial roads would increase significantly, requiring expansion to accommodate the volume of traffic. In most instances there are needs to construct additional roads to serve properties. This has resulted in additional right-of-way and utility relocation costs and an increase in impervious cover along the arterials and new roads.

The SA-BC MPO forecasts little additional growth in Bexar County outside of Loop 1604 beyond which is already permitted for development. The US 281 corridor also serves traffic originating

from or destined to Comal County. In 2035, population in the area along US 281 between Loop 1604 and the Comal County line is projected to increase by 32% under the SA-BC MPO's adopted forecast. The growth forecast for Comal County is much higher. Continued growth in Comal County and the longer distance "through" traffic contributes to the undesirable traffic conditions between Loop 1604 and Borgfeld Drive.

The non-toll, toll, and managed lanes scenarios have three main lanes in each direction and two to three frontage road lanes in each direction. A reduced footprint for the Expressway – non-toll scenario was explored, but capacity considerations and safety requirements for on and off ramps and the access and egress between the main lanes and the adjacent land uses contributed to the proposed frontage road lane configuration. Regarding the Elevated Expressway Alternative, the alternatives analysis considered the impacts of aesthetics and limited access.

Managed lanes are alternative operational strategies for the Expressway and Elevated Expressway alternatives that will be considered in the Draft EIS along with non-toll and toll alternatives.

Response to Comment 53: Detailed information on the alternatives development and screening process and the results of this process were provided at the public meeting. All handouts, exhibits and presentation slides are included in **Appendix C**.

Due to the early stage of the EIS in April 2010 when this meeting occurred, the alternatives were presented at a conceptual level of detail. The Overpass/Expansion Alternative and the Elevated Expressway Alternative were presented with driveways and side streets colored red in numerous locations and noted that "Direct access may not be allowed as shown due to safety concerns. Further analysis is required to determine safe access solutions. Solutions include frontage roads, backage roads, and purchase of access rights." Once the effort to analyze safe access solutions was further along in the process, the preliminary cost estimates were presented for the build alternatives to the Community Advisory Committee on February 16, 2011, and refined cost estimates will be included in the Draft EIS. All materials from public meetings and Community Advisory Committee meetings are available on www.411on281.com/US281EIS. Other information was and will continue to be provided as it becomes available.

The toll and managed lane options would have all main lanes (not frontage roads) as tolled or managed; however, if a tolled or managed lane option were to be selected, the toll rate and policy for managed lanes will be determined in accordance with Alamo RMA toll policy. [The construction timelines will largely depend on the funding availability. With limited information on public funding for the non-toll option, and without a current investment grade Traffic and Revenue analysis for the toll and managed lanes options, it is difficult to estimate construction timelines for the alternatives.]

In the Overpass/Expansion Alternative (April 2010), the average peak period speeds forecasted were 20 mph in the year 2035 as compared to an existing speed of 25 mph. Though it may be hard to comprehend that speeds would actually decrease after constructing overpasses at major intersections and adding lanes on the northern section of US 281, it should be considered in context of how large the traffic demand is or will likely be during each time period. The existing traffic on US 281 is 90,000 vehicles per day and therefore the facility operates at an average peak period speed of 25 mph. If no improvements were made until 2035, the facility would likely accommodate 115,000 vehicles per day, but the average peak period speed would

decrease substantially to as low as 5 mph. Construction of the overpasses and additional lanes could be expected to provide substantial improvement to capacity and speed in 2035 but the traffic demand would be expected to increase from 115,000 to 170,000 vehicles per day. These demands would rise more than the additional capacity could serve, so the average peak period speed would likely fall from 25 mph to 20 mph. Though this is lower than the existing 25 mph, the average daily traffic is also much lower at about half of what it would be in 2035. The higher average peak period speeds forecasted for the Expressway Alternative consider the elimination of all major and minor cross street and driveway conflicts through construction of continuous frontage roads. The increased speed also reflects the additional capacity the two to three lane frontage roads in each direction would provide.

After this Public Meeting, the US 281 EIS Team analyzed two variations of the Overpass/Expansion Alternative. The first variation was presented to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Peer Technical Review Committee (PTRC) in October 2010. In the October 2010 version the northern section, due to the addition of traffic signals and more vehicle conflicts associated with side streets and driveways, the average peak period speed in 2035 decreased to 12 mph as compared to 37-49 mph for the Expressway and Elevated Expressway Alternatives. The second variation (February 2011) was presented to the CAC in February 2011, and to the PTRC in June 2011. This revised alternative still substantially underperformed the Expressway and Elevated Expressway Alternatives. Slide presentations made to all CAC and PTRC meetings are posted to the project web site, available for viewing at <http://www.411on281.com/us281eis/>.

SA-BC MPO plans are updated frequently to address changes to the growth forecasts based on what the area has experienced in the recent years. Plans created in the 1990's relied upon forecasts which assumed a continuation of growth experienced in the 1990's. The area along US 281 experienced much higher growth in the 2000's as compared to the 1990's, and therefore it is reasonable to expect the originally forecasted infrastructure needs would change over time. Additionally, plans from the 1990's would have relied on planning horizons around the year of 2020, while current planning efforts such as the US 281 EIS must be predicated on a year 2035 horizon which will include additional growth not contemplated in the earlier studies.

Despite major differences in the amount of capacity provided in each alternative, the demand will be similar in all instances. That is largely because there are no alternate routes with available capacity for this traffic to use in traveling between the study area (as well as further north in Comal County) and Loop 1604/downtown San Antonio. The traffic forecasts (which are based on the SA-BC MPO procedures) are intended to identify the likely traffic demands in future years.

Traffic and Revenue studies are more specialized efforts for financial institutions, which seek to quantify the lowest amount of traffic likely to use toll facilities based on various risks (macro economic conditions, fuel prices, inflation, value of time, etc.) Therefore, general traffic forecasts are not comparable to traffic and revenue studies due to the difference in their purpose. In a similar fashion, the managed lane projects which exist in Texas today are both located in Houston, and are limited in scope to a small portion of the total roadway cross section. As such, they should represent a small portion of the total demand. All new main lanes would be operated as managed lanes under the managed lane option. This would provide more opportunities for motorists to use these lanes.

Though it is quite difficult to accurately forecast travel patterns, employment patterns, or development patterns 30 years from now, the role of planning is to ensure that the necessary

facilities and infrastructure are in place if and when growth occurs. In order to ensure that the changes in the social, environmental, and economic conditions are reflected in long range planning, the SA-BC MPO updates the long range transportation plan every five years. This is also reflected in the fact that the growth forecasts for the US 281 study area in the current SA-BC MPO plan, *Mobility 2035*, are much higher than in the plan a decade ago. This continuous planning process ensures that the future growth is addressed appropriately and the planned transportation system is developed to accommodate it. Looking back in history, the demand in the 1950s did not justify major portions of the Interstate system. However, today it would be hard to imagine the United States without this Interstate system.

Facilities should not be viewed only in the context of opening day traffic since they are built to serve for several decades. As an example, most circumferential and “development” highways open to relatively low demand, and only over time do traffic volumes grow. In the instance of US 281, which is a radial freeway connecting a growing suburban and exurban area with a large central business district, the demand is already occurring, and the likelihood of growth is strongly expected. Indeed, citizens are already suffering from the effects of this growth. However, *Mobility 2035* demonstrates that existing motor fuel tax revenues are not adequate to support the improvements required to solve the forecasted problems. If motor fuel taxes were raised, additional revenues could be provided, but in the absence of increasing those taxes, other forms of revenue generation may be required to solve the problem.

No bias or “skew” has been included in any of the analyses conducted by the US 281 EIS Team. The Expressway and Elevated Expressway Alternatives do provide more capacity than the Overpass/Expansion Alternative. This results in service to more motorists, at higher speeds, and safer operations. The Draft EIS will present cost estimates and analyze potential impacts on the Edwards Aquifer.

A Preferred Alternative will not be identified in the Draft EIS or at the Public Hearing. After all public comments have been considered from the Public Hearing, a Preferred Alternative will be recommended for additional analysis in the Final EIS. Public Meeting #4 (anticipated in late 2012) will provide an opportunity to ask questions about the Preferred Alternative, discuss topics important to you with other citizens, and submit comments.

The Overpass/Expansion Alternative (April 2010) would have provided grade separations at major interchanges as described during the public meeting. The major difference between the Overpass/Expansion and the Expressway and Elevated Expressway is that Overpass/Expansion would not have provided full control of access. This means that the properties along US 281 would have access to US 281 – via frontage roads if they existed, or directly onto the main lanes. If a driveway connected to US 281 directly at the main lanes, future traffic growth may have warranted a signal for safety purposes. These signals would have reduced capacity, increased potential vehicular conflicts, and also reduced speeds. Backage road solutions were investigated, but would have required purchase of private lands, and likely still required the purchase of access rights to control access to US 281. Improvements to arterial roads surrounding US 281 were also explored. A number of such improvements are already planned, but would not solve all of the existing or anticipated traffic problems. Additional arterial improvements were considered, but their impact on neighborhoods and the environment would be more adverse.

After the April 2010 Public Meeting, during the effort to analyze safe access solutions it was determined that the safest and most economical access could be provided by the use of a frontage road in most locations. To incorporate frontage roads throughout the corridor would

provide an alternative that was very similar to the Expressway Alternative – Non-toll. After extensive traffic and engineering analysis, the “smaller footprint, lower cost” approach was not found to adequately address the access and mobility needs of the project. Overpass/Expansion was therefore eliminated from further consideration in the Draft EIS. See General Response 11 for more information.

Frontage roads are used in all alternatives to provide access to land parcels while minimizing congestion and safety issues through the control of access to US 281. These needs are independent of whether tolls are used or not. The traffic studies associated with these alternatives have shown that the lack of improvements (toll or non-toll) to US 281 will result in more traffic diverting through neighborhoods because of congestion on US 281.

6.0 NEXT STEPS

6.1. Meeting Report Posting and Notification of Comments Receiving a Response

The Alamo RMA will, once the meeting report is approved, post the meeting report on the website developed for the exchange of information with the community on US 281 improvements, specifically, www.411on281.com.

Once the meeting report is approved, the Alamo RMA will provide notice to all individuals who submitted a comment and supplied contact information. A notice will be sent in the similar medium as the comment was received describing that their comment has been addressed within the meeting report. At this time, the Meeting Report will be available on the project website at www.411on281.com, available for public review in hard copy form at the Alamo RMA offices and at public library locations along the US 281 corridor.